

**ADVOCACY FOR SEXUAL FREEDOM:  
A Practical Guide to  
Creating and Leading Issue Advocacy Campaigns**



1312 18<sup>th</sup> St. NW Suite 103  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202.466.4900  
[www.woodhullfoundation.org](http://www.woodhullfoundation.org)

Version 1.5.October 2003.A Work in Progress  
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## Preface

Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Progress in vindicating human rights requires us—as dedicated citizens—to accomplish important changes in the world by effective activism, by educating the public, and by confronting those elements of our society that seek to restrict our rights and to discriminate against those who are different in their views and lifestyles.

Thinking of a more fundamental goal than the freedom of safe and consensual sexual expression is difficult. All of us are sexual beings. The ways in which we express and practice our sexuality are basic to who we are, how we think of ourselves, and how we live our lives. Yet, in America and the world today, powerful groups often cloak themselves in a mantle of stern religiosity and support an agenda that represses all but a few forms of sexual expression. On issues ranging from abstinence-only sex education to freedom of choice in reproductive matters or to outright criminalization of non-traditional sexual practices, these groups seek to control—and in many ways, they already do—some of the most private and intimate aspects of our lives. These threats to sexual freedom remain potent despite the powerful affirmation by the Supreme Court to decriminalize sodomy in *Lawrence v Texas* by recognizing the importance of liberty for private sexual expression.

The Woodhull Freedom Foundation has an ambitious goal to move the agenda forward. The Foundation seeks to mobilize, in the field of sexual freedom, that very group of citizens of which Mead wrote. Through public education, through organizing the diverse constituencies whose sexual expression and practices are the focus of oppression and discrimination, and through constructive activism, we see a day not far in the future when sexual diversity is welcomed and its free expression is celebrated for what it should be – a fulfillment of our personalities and a source of joy and love.

That vision, however, carries with it the need for hard work and, more importantly, efforts that are intelligently and effectively organized. This handbook, which reflects the decades of experience in social activism of the founders of the Woodhull Freedom Foundation and many other successful activists, is an important first step in mobilizing the forces that we know will join and advance our cause.

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## Introduction

In this post-*Lawrence* era, an important issue in American life is gradually moving to the forefront of political debate in the United States and around the world. It is an issue that heretofore was confined to whispers and innuendo. This issue is sexual freedom – freedom to express your sexuality, freedom to engage in safe and consensual sexual practices. As this issue becomes more openly debated, the reaction against sexual freedom is also growing and being organized by right-wing political extremist groups that in some cases invoke a narrow view of religious teachings in support of continued sexual repression and discrimination. The time has come, therefore, for those who seek to promote the sexual freedom cause to organize effectively for what this handbook will call direct action issue advocacy.

Two trends of recent years have laid the groundwork for the creation of organized, sexual freedom advocacy at the local, national, and international levels. The first and most advanced trend is Americans' increasing openness to, and tolerance of, sexuality. Beginning with the Kinsey Report in the 1950s and continuing with the sexual liberation movement (Playboy magazine, sexual themes in films, television and advertising), America has become accustomed to thinking and talking about sex as a positive element of our lives instead of a secret, forbidden subject. Broad campaigns, such as the civil rights, feminist and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) movements, have concurrently challenged stereotypes and forced the public to confront issues of repression and discrimination.

The second trend is the recent resurgence of enthusiasm for direct action issue advocacy. After the civil rights, Vietnam, gay pride and feminist protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the zeal for social activism declined markedly in the 1980s and early 1990s. The country visibly refocused its attention on economic prosperity and consequently distrusted the social agendas that would rock the boat. In the last several years, however, direct action activism has re-emerged, as seen in the large demonstrations against globalism and the Iraq war.

That this new activism includes themes relevant to sexual freedom is encouraging. Almost every major demonstration includes participation by gay, feminist, and transgendered peoples and other sexual minorities. This sexual rights participation, however, lacks organization and a clear focus on important sexual freedom issues, much like most of today's activism. Above all, it lacks an understanding of how to be effective in the political arena.

Our opposition, on the other hand, has a clear focus, is well funded and well organized, and is highly skilled at marshalling public opinion and achieving political success. The right-wing religious political extremists of American politics

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have won over much of the public to their economic agenda of lower taxes, smaller government, deregulation of business, and the primacy of unfettered market forces. They also have a severe social agenda that they want America to adopt in the name of “family values”: opposition to legalized abortion, birth control, gay and lesbian rights, sex education, and to free speech on sexual issues. A major theme of this agenda is the perpetuation of laws and regulations against non-traditional sexual practices, coupled with pressure on the business world—hotels, restaurants, bars, etc.—to exclude those who practice sex in non-traditional ways.

These right-wing political extremists have two major advantages in their program of sexual repression. First, they have a consistent, coherent program that brings together all of the major conservative social issues. In contrast, advocates of sexual freedom tend to be fragmented into single-issue organizations that, more often than not, are reluctant to work in concert with other groups who should be their natural allies. Gay male groups rarely work consistently with lesbian groups, and both gay and lesbian organizations shy away from the BDSM/Leather and transgender communities. Swinger and polyamory groups, which have large constituencies and whose issues are often identical to those of the GLBT and BDSM/Leather communities, have rarely seen themselves as productive allies. Racial divisions also exist in some of these communities. The feminist movement has only recently begun to see the convergence between some of its issues and those of the various sexual freedom groups.

This fragmentation also extends to international sexual freedom issues. The repression of women in some Middle East, Asian and African societies, forced genital mutilation in some countries, and the AIDS epidemic in the developing world are issues that are almost never joined with U.S. domestic sexual rights agendas.

The second advantage that religious political extremists have in sexual issue advocacy is that they are extremely well organized, well funded and highly experienced. They know how activism is done, how to generate grassroots support for their positions, and how to influence—and even control—elected officials, bureaucrats, corporate decision-makers and educators. Their fundraising and media capabilities dwarf those of all but a few progressive organizations.

In the area of sexual freedom, the Woodhull Freedom Foundation seeks to level the playing field against the religious political extremists. One of our goals is to unite the forces that have common or parallel issues relating to sexual freedom. Through education, conferences on major issues, and through the encouragement of productive dialogue on both common issues and controversial issues, we hope to increase unity and cooperation among diverse and often fractious groups.

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A second Woodhull focus—and the purpose of this handbook—is to teach our communities how to advocate effectively. This handbook is a guide to direct action issue advocacy, by which we mean building broad citizen support for our issues with the ultimate goal of persuading government officials, particularly elected officials as well as corporate officers, that failure to adopt the policies we advocate will provoke major citizen and consumer responses. For elected officials, effective direct action issue advocacy instills a healthy fear that adoption of repressive or discriminatory policies will jeopardize their re-election. For corporations, the equivalent fear is that failure to adopt progressive corporate policies will generate hostile responses from both consumers and shareholders.

This handbook is very specific and very pragmatic; it is a true nuts and bolts guide. We have tried to make it as useful for local activists and community groups as for nationwide organizations. But we urge you, while absorbing the practical details, to keep in mind that we have one supreme advantage over the religious political extremists – ours ideas and policies are kind, generous and right in ways that fundamentally appeal to the best instincts in humanity. We may have some catching up to do in unity and in organization, but we—not the religious political extremists—have liberty and freedom on our side.

## **Section 1: An Overview of Direct Action Issue Advocacy**

### **What is Direct Issue Advocacy Organizing?**

Direct action organizing involves the people with the problem, and focuses them on organizing and agreeing on a solution. Through strength of numbers and effective use of direct action techniques, they apply pressure to elected and appointed officials and/or to corporations. The fundamental characteristic of direct action is that the people themselves organize and take action to solve their problem.

Because the essence of direct action organizing is to mobilize the power of the people, it consequently is as important to empower the individuals involved, as it is to solve the problem.

Understanding how self-interest relates to direct action organizing is important. Individuals are motivated to organize for personal benefit, their families, or their community. Your role as an organizer is to convince people that organizing is a way to get what they want. The next step is to develop and implement the strategies and tactics to achieve these goals.

### **Becoming an Organizer for Sexual Freedom**

Think for a minute: Why are you reading this handbook? Why are you interested in direct action organizing? You are obviously interested in the cause of sexual freedom. But becoming a direct action organizer also means you are motivated to take a leadership role.

Many organizers are selfless people who are motivated to do something because they perceive injustice in their communities and want to make life better for people. Some people become leaders for self-advancement and personal benefit. Some organizers feel a need to serve. Whatever your motivations, they must be strong enough for a commitment to energize others because we know that we are in the minority as sexual freedom activists and organizers. Our biggest challenge is not always doing something, it is motivating other people to do something.

Another reason why strong commitment is required is that sexual freedom organizers will often face hostility and suspicion. Because sexuality is so personal and private, the consequences of openness can be severe.

Good interpersonal skills are key for developing the trust necessary for effective organizing. Good organizers should like people and genuinely care about those working with them. Like all relationships, trust and respect are paramount;

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honesty, directness, and the ability to meet commitments go a long way toward establishing credibility. Remember that organizing effectively means understanding the self-interests of people and using those self-interests to energize their participation. This consideration requires, above all, the willingness to listen carefully, through conversations and structured interviews, to understand each person's motivations and values.

### **Proactive and Responsive Organizing**

Imagine this scenario: Your phone rings at 2:00 a.m. A friend calls to report that police have charged the owners of a local sex club with operating a house of prostitution and have shut it down. The police have arrested several patrons on related charges, whom they are holding pending bail hearings in the morning. This moment is your wake-up call: what are you going to do?

Now imagine this scenario: Reading the paper one day, you notice that the city council is considering legislation that will substantially revise local zoning regulations. The council member who represents your neighborhood is a member of the sub-committee and has been generally positive on GLBT issues. You know that your BDSM group wants to rent a space for educational and social meetings, but has been fearful of potential negative reactions by city officials. This situation is your opportunity: what are you going to do?

Today's sexual freedom organizers will face similar situations in the course of their work. Both scenarios require organizers to take steps to mobilize an effective response: framing the issue to appeal to a broad number of people, researching the political and economic issues involved, and developing a campaign.

An important difference exists between these two scenarios: one is responsive and the other is proactive. When someone is arrested, is about to lose their kids, or faces harassment and violence because of his/her sexuality, responsive activism seeks to keep peoples' lives and livelihoods safe. However, long-term, effective proactive activism, as presented in the second scenario, aims at changing laws, policies, or practices to avert such crises. Proactive organizing seeks to educate public and corporate officials, the media, and the public about alternative sexual expression and lifestyle issues, and organizes supporters to help change laws that restrict sexual expression.

### **Principles of Issue Advocacy and Direct Action**

This handbook focuses primarily on proactive issue advocacy and direct action. Many of the techniques described will be useful for that 2:00 a.m. emergency phone call, but more effective activism avoids waiting around for an emergency to happen before organizing the reform advocacy forces.

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Issue advocacy means developing and seeking to implement public policies that will advance and protect the interests of the community. Public policies are the rules and procedures that guide the actions of public officials and private citizens. In other words, public policies can be as major as an Amendment to the Constitution or a United Nations resolution, a Supreme Court decision, or as basic as a zoning regulation, a police procedure, a school policy, or even the way a public health officer defines terms. In private arenas, issue advocacy focuses on the ways that corporations and private institutions conduct business and affect the lives of their workers and consumers.

Direct action means using pressure tactics to achieve policy changes. We are generally not focusing on massive, nationwide policy changes, but rather on action for change in your own community or state. Ratification of a proposed constitutional amendment requires massive national organizing in at least three-fifths of the states. Winning a favorable Supreme Court decision may take years, even decades. On the other hand, changing the procedures used by the local police may mean negotiating with the chief of police and the district attorney. A restaurant that refuses to serve sexual alternative organizations may face a boycott and pickets until policies are changed. A private college that fires a faculty member for researching and writing about sexually explicit topics may be subject to media pressure for suppressing free speech.

While much of what is set forth in this manual can be applied to national issue campaigns, our major focus is on tangible, local issues. Direct action issue advocacy creates the pressure necessary for policy changes. It is directed at key decision-makers who make changes in policies and procedures. Sometimes these people are at the top of the hierarchy; however, as anyone who has ever worked in government, a large institution or a corporation knows, the right secretary or low-level civil servant is sometimes the key person.

### **Do You Need to Create An Organization?**

A direct action campaign may or may not be conducted by an existing organization – that is, an organization with a permanent structure that requires long-term commitments, that deals with a multiplicity of issues and incidents on a continuing basis, and that needs regular accomplishments to maintain its membership and financing.

Issue campaigns are flexible, temporary arrangements with a recognized set of goals. While an organization may sponsor an issue campaign, the leaders of organizations have to keep in mind the larger developmental goals of their group. This situation may be a problem: conflicts may arise when leaders seek to preserve the interests of their organization over the good of the campaign.

An excellent example of a campaign – or movement – not conducted by a pre-existing organization is the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) in 1984-86, of which Woodhull Freedom Foundation (WFF) Board member Mary Frances Berry was a founder. The organizers represented labor unions, policy organizations, concerned citizens, non-profit institutions, and international activists. They never established a formal organization, although one of their goals was to set up the TransAfrica Forum as a major player in Washington policy circles, and to establish Randall Robinson, TransAfrica’s executive director, as a spokesperson on foreign policy issues involving Africa. This flexible arrangement permitted organizers to launch a series of direct protest actions aimed at ending South Africa’s brutal and repressive racial segregation system known as apartheid and calling for the release of imprisoned Nelson Mandela. FSAM was never a formal organization, but rather was a national and international campaign that celebrated in 1990 Mandela’s release; in 1995, the former political prisoner became Prime Minister of South Africa.

A permanent organization is often useful as a mechanism for responsive advocacy because the pre-existence of a group experienced in responding to particular types of crises makes possible a quicker and more effective response. In the sexual freedom field, there are organizations in numerous cities that engage in issue response with varying effectiveness.

Whether, and to what extent, a particular direct advocacy campaign requires creation of an organization is a decision to be made on a case-by-case basis. Information on creating an organization is set forth later in this manual in Section 2 on page 27, and numerous publications and resources containing more detail are listed in Appendix A on page 69. The primary focus of this manual, however, will be on the design and implementation of the direct advocacy issue campaign itself.

### **Advocating What? The Importance of Defining Your Problems and Issues**

An effective direct advocacy campaign often succeeds or fails depending on whether the organizers have correctly analyzed the legal/economic/social problem, and have effectively framed the issue that addresses that problem. A problem is an area of concern. An issue is a public policy solution that addresses the problem in full or in part. For example, racism is problem, and affirmative action is an issue.

Another example of problems and issues is that employment discrimination based on gender identity and expression is a problem. Adding the term “gender expression” to federal and state laws prohibiting employment discrimination is a solution, while persuading a television drama to include a storyline on gender discrimination is a tactic, a term discussed in full later. An issue is defined as the solution you will be advocating for the problem you have identified.

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## How to Identify Problems

Successful organizers are good listeners. A good organizer listens not only to the so-called leaders who talk the most and the loudest, but also to those who don't say much.

Organizing a community is hard work. It does not happen overnight, even in an emergency when rallying the troops within a limited time is crucial. Developing and organizing networks and official contacts over the course of many meetings and events results in better preparation for time-sensitive situations.

The organizer's job is to act as the community's liaison and facilitator to help people vocalize their interests, concerns, and their problems. Listening attentively encourages people to open up. Most people, given the opportunity and the assurance that the organizer respects their views, love to talk.

Never assume that you know a person's interest. Take the time to listen carefully through conversations or structured interviews designed to understand people's motivations and values. Such conversations do not have to be formal interviews, and organizers should not always have to start with the formal leaders of the community. In the film *The Laramie Project*, recall that after the death of Matthew Shepard in 1998, Moisés Kaufman and members of New York City's Tectonic Theater Project went to Laramie, Wyoming to interview the town's residents prior to establishing any working contacts. Faced with a great deal of early hostility, they slowly built trust by listening carefully and respectfully to residents. The resulting film shows a nuanced understanding of the townspeople's interests and fears.

(<http://channels.gay.com/entertainment/television/news/?sernum=143>)

Self-interest motivates people to act, and self-interest is one key to issue advocacy. Good organizers help people to identify their problems and help them develop solutions—issues—to solve those problems. The final challenge of organizing is to convince people that by working together, they can pressure officials to adopt and implement the policy solutions they have presented.

## Framing the Issue to Address the Problem

The issue—that is, the solution—is the central element of your advocacy campaign. For the campaign to be effective, your issue must solve (or at least greatly ameliorate) the problem; it must have sufficiently broad appeal to attract the degree of support needed for a successful campaign. For suggestions on how to frame policy and media issues, check out <http://www.spinproject.org>.

A well-framed issue will meet many, if not most, of the following criteria:

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- Winning results in visible improvements that benefit people. The people can directly see a tangible result versus an intangible one.
- It empowers people. They will feel it is their victory when you win.
- It changes the power relationship between citizens and decision-makers.
- It is worthwhile so people feel good about participating.
- People feel passionately enough about the issue to take action.
- It is winnable. It is important that this goal is evident to people from the beginning. Overthrowing the administration is idealistic, but electing a representative willing to act on your concerns is realistic. If you choose something too broad or overwhelming, then you are less likely to win.
- Its attainability is sufficiently apparent so people are willing to donate money.
- The problem is widely recognized and large numbers of people support your policy solution.
- The decision-makers are clearly identifiable.
- It is easily understood without long complicated explanations.
- It has a satisfactory time frame to achieve the policy.
- It does not divide your constituency.
- It has a financial hook – it makes money or reduces expenses for people.
- The issue will plainly improve people's lives.
- It is consistent with the organizers' and your vision and values.

Use the checklist following this section to review issues by discussing the strengths and weaknesses with several participants.

Organizers should try to reach a consensus among all participants. Getting everyone to agree to a particular policy solution may require tweaking the proposal, but the power of the community will be greater in the end.

In developing policy solutions to problems, conflicts may arise when a particular solution works well for one group but not for another. Problems with zoning and liquor regulations often encounter this difficulty. For example, suggesting that zoning laws permit private sex clubs to operate in a designated area of the city may seem like a fine policy solution because local swing and BDSM educational groups see this instance as an excellent opportunity to start their own clubs without harassment by city officials. Gay men, however, may not be so enthusiastic about this solution. They may be concerned that this solution would segregate some of their community into an isolated area, and would make them targets for homophobic violence.

Where such divergent views appear within the communities, some organizers become discouraged and may even abandon their work. Yet, some revision of

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the initial proposal may be all that is required. For example, rather than designating an isolated area for private sex clubs, the zoning commission could permit such clubs to operate in and around an already established gay neighborhood. While this solution may be more costly for the swing and BDSM groups, it would also offer a degree of protection from inquisitive local snoops in “heterosexual” neighborhoods. In addition, a night out could mean more than one stop, because the gay area is closer to public transportation and entertainment venues.

Further thoughts on developing effective issues can be found at <http://www.spinproject.org>.

## The Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies and Opponents	Targets	Tactics

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 mwacademy1@aol.com www.midwestacademy.com

## **Understanding the Legal Context of Your Issue**

We cannot overemphasize the importance of knowing the current law and legislative procedures. Public schools once required—and in many areas still require—that all students study the Constitution in civics classes and understand how laws are made. Good activists understand how to use these processes to achieve their goal, which is to develop a worthwhile public policy solution to the problem.

Knowing the current law doesn't necessarily require consulting with an attorney. Most lay people can reach an adequate comprehension of the laws and regulations relevant to most sexual freedom issues by taking the time to research and read these statutes and regulations (and sometimes a relevant court decision) carefully and thoroughly, with the understanding that subtle nuances and wordings can leave a lot of wiggle room that may allow for several possible meanings. For information on how to research, see the following section, "Researching Your Issue and Its Ramifications." In 1963, Clarence Earl Gideon was a barely literate prisoner in Florida, who after carefully reading the Constitution and federal court decisions, wrote a letter—in pencil on lined prison paper—to the U.S. Supreme Court arguing that the state should have provided him a lawyer because he was too poor to afford one. The Court agreed, and in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, decreed that the state had a duty to provide for the defense of persons charged with serious crimes (*Gideon v. Wainwright*, 372 U.S. 335 (1963); Anthony Lewis, *Gideon's Trumpet* (1964)).

Sometimes, of course, the sexual freedom issue may involve an area of law so complex that few non-lawyers can achieve a sufficient level of comprehension. The U.S. tax code is a classic example. In such cases, professional legal help may be needed, and you may wish to refer to organizations (such as the WFF, the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom, or the American Civil Liberties Union) that can refer you to an attorney with the necessary expertise, and perhaps to one willing to assist you on a pro bono basis.

## **Researching Your Issue and Its Ramifications**

In this section, we discuss the crucial role of factual research in developing effective issue advocacy campaigns. Research takes time to read and to spend in the library or on the internet. Organizers should avoid skipping this section or delegating this task to someone else because information is power, and it is the essential power behind effective advocacy.

## **Understanding the Scope of the Problem**

Problems are big things, and often no single solution can solve the entire scope of the problem. However, understanding the problem as fully as possible permits organizers and community activists to develop a workable set of policy solutions to address many, or most, of peoples' concerns.

According to many students, teachers, parents, administrators and policy researchers, the current state of sex education in public schools is a problem. Students do not learn the basics of reproductive human biology; they are not apprised of potential health problems or preventive measures; they do not learn how to prevent pregnancy using barrier methods, such as condoms; they do not learn how to talk about sex with intimate partners, or about non-traditional lifestyles. This problem has increased over the last twenty years as religious political extremists have systematically attacked public health and sex education curricula, established "no promo homo" rules for public school funding, and promoted "abstinence-only until marriage" lesson plans.

Many policy solutions exist to this problem. Offering sex education through private groups is one solution. The Unitarian-Universalist church has taken steps to address the problem by creating an ethical, comprehensive sex education program for high school students, which is taught in its churches. Local and national groups for GLBT youth provide workshops and support groups in order to combat the isolation and fear that many questioning middle school and high school students face. Reproductive rights groups offer free counseling to youth, and have fought hard against provisions that require informing the parents of underage persons about the use of their services. These three examples of service programs directly address the void that a lack of sex education creates.

Issue advocacy is another means of addressing the problem. The anti-sex/no-promo-homo curriculum is the result of issue advocacy by social conservatives. Sexual freedom advocates can use many of the same tactics to pressure decision-makers to allow a more inclusive, and more positive, public school curriculum.

## **Identifying the Decision-Making Process and Decision-Makers**

To understand the scope of a problem, organizers should at the outset learn its history and identify the major players in the decision-making process. Even where a problem is very large, even national in scope, focusing on the issue in its local context can often provide a workable scale.

For example, here is a sample list of research questions for investigating an abstinence-only curriculum in the local schools:



- When did the public school system adopt this curriculum?
- Who was responsible for the decision? Did the school board vote for it, or did an agency or department in the school system make an administrative decision about this curriculum?
- What precisely is the prescribed curriculum?
- Is this curriculum taught in all schools, or just some schools? If it is taught selectively, what characterizes these schools?
- Who writes the grant proposals for these monies?
- Do people outside the school system promote its adoption? Who?
- Who actually teaches these courses? In some school districts, outside teachers employed by private organizations or private companies teach these classes as part of a contract with the school system.
- How much money does the school district receive from the federal government to offer this curriculum?
- Does the state also offer public financing to the schools for abstinence-only education?

The answers to these questions are public information. Public schools are supported by the local taxes we all pay. Sunshine laws and public record keeping rules require that school boards and school administrators keep accurate records of the monies spent and of the decision-making process. Remember the movie, *Erin Brokovich*? Researchers often find themselves in a dusty, ill-equipped back room digging through old account books, but establishing a record of the process is sometimes more than half the battle. You do not have to dress like Brokovich or look like Julia Roberts to succeed. It was Brokovich's persistence to follow a lead all the way to the end that was the key to her success.

### **Identifying and Working with Allies**

Identifying potential allies is similar to seeking out diverse viewpoints on a problem, but the development of support from allies is a different and important process.

Allies are people or groups that can be enlisted to endorse and join in the issue campaign. Building coalitions, or alliances, is advantageous because they give you added power, credibility, and money to win your issue. However, working within such an alliance may also have disadvantages, which are discussed later in this section. Because the word coalition implies a more permanent structure than we discuss here, we will use the term "alliance" in this handbook. When naming your alliance effort, choose a name that suggests it is not necessarily permanent, such as "campaign" or "committee." Alliances are most easily created when issues are framed broadly enough that social change organizations, community organizations, and local businesses can easily

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cooperate. These broader-based efforts may help dispel the public perception that your sexual freedom issue is radical or outside the mainstream. In addition, alliances may enhance your resources, both in terms of money and people power.

In structuring an alliance, pay attention to the potential for divergent interests. Also, be aware that certain members will have more influence than others because of their political or financial power. Self-interest applies to organizations as it does to individuals. Understand the strengths, weaknesses, and motivations of any organization you invite to sit at the table. You should invite groups and businesses that can contribute something more than just money, but consider carefully the extent to which any rifts among groups and businesses that you invite may cause rifts with or among existing alliance members. Because sexual freedom advocacy will be new to most of your potential supporters, you will first need to “recruit” an influential ally or two to help you get others to sign on more easily. In other words, we suggest “pre-selling” a couple of allies.

In advocating on sexual freedom issues, the usual suspects are accustomed to assisting one another. Thus, an established procedure is to contact GLAAD (the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, <http://www.glaad.org>) when the media does a poor job covering an issue. In a similar manner, many legal defense funds, such as Lambda Legal Defense, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) or the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, may provide crucial advice on an issue; organizers, however, should never assume that such national organizations will take on the case themselves. These national groups and their local counterparts can, however, provide valuable advice and can put you in touch with important local resources and potential allies.

Organizers may also find allies in “unusual suspects.” To the conservative wing of American politics, privacy and freedom from government scrutiny is a primary concern. Thus, in ultra-conservative Utah, a private sex club busted by the police may find support from Libertarians and Republicans who believe that people should have the right to do what they want behind closed doors. In a similar vein, civil libertarians fighting against giving the federal government broad-investigation powers under the 2002 Patriot Act were at first surprised when Utah Senator Orrin Hatch and Citizens for Tax Reform leader Grover Norquist joined with the ACLU, NOW and NAACP to protest these sections of the bill.

Note, however, that an alliance is not always the optimal vehicle for sexual freedom issue advocacy. An alliance should be avoided or limited to a small set of like-minded groups where you feel the need to retain a high degree of control over issue definition or tactics. An issue that requires particularly provocative, “in

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your face” tactics is probably unsuitable for an alliance. You should always make sure that creating an alliance truly enhances your agenda.

Disparity in power and resources among organizations may create disharmony. Some organizations will be able to play a significant role while others may be too weak to be much help. Smaller groups may be resentful of the power of the larger groups, and larger groups may resent the credit that smaller organizations receive for work they did not do.

If you are asked to join an alliance on another issue, then consider if it will advance your agenda or encourage the members of that coalition to support later the efforts of your group. If not, then don't participate. Furthermore, always consider whether you have adequate resources to participate meaningfully in the alliance's project. A final point to contemplate is whether the efforts you devote to work with the alliance will distract you from your primary purpose.

## **Creating and Maintaining a Successful Alliance**

### Convincing an organization to become an ally

An organization must have a reason to be your ally. Your job is to help them recognize the benefits of an alliance and how your issue relates to their agenda. Your issue must be consistent with the core ideals of the target organization. However, that alone is generally not a sufficient attraction. Of greater importance is showing how helping you may establish a more fundamental issue that is critical to success on their work. For example, vindicating a privacy right for swingers may also advance the privacy rights in a similar context for gays, BDSM practitioners, etc. Another selling point may be that participation in your cause by a certain organization may help them gain visibility in the media and increase their membership or sales. You may be able to argue persuasively that, by supporting your issue, they will expose their organization to a large base of potential supporters or consumers not previously available to them – sexual freedom activists and practitioners of non-traditional sex.

Be aware of the history and culture of the organization, and be respectful of it. Some organizations, even though they may seem on the surface to be natural allies, may not be a good fit if the cultural differences with sexual freedom issues are too significant. This consideration, for example, may sometimes prevent organizations that see themselves as having “gone mainstream” from allying with groups that focus on non-traditional sex practices.

### Molding an effective alliance

Proper structuring of the issue and thoughtful choices among tactical options are important in molding an effective alliance. Choose an issue that truly has a common interest for the various allies. Develop middle-of-the-road tactics

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aggressive enough to be effective, yet not so aggressive as to alienate the more conservative alliance members. Realize that certain groups and businesses have more power and will consequently have more say in making decisions. Decide how your group wants to work within this alliance. Will the alliance control everything? Will particular allies work only on certain aspects of the campaign?

Organizational structure may be tricky in advocacy alliances. Assigning a neutral party to be in control is generally best. Selecting someone who can be objective and who can separate the responsibilities to her or his own organization from the role in the alliance is important. Make sure everyone knows and recognizes that this person is acting on behalf of the alliance and not just as a representative of his or her organization.

To the extent possible, maintain continuity in representatives of organizations. Make sure that you have a person from each organization who will be regularly participating in the alliance meetings and activities. If continuity is not maintained or if an organization is permitted to send different people to represent them at each meeting, then the effort will be less cohesive and less likely to succeed.

Make sure you understand the self-interest of your group in this coalition and how your supporters can cooperatively participate with those from other organizations.

#### Understand that power and resources differ among participants

Disparity among participants often arises from differences in the types of resources they are able to contribute. Some organizations will be more helpful than others. Some organizations may be in a position primarily to donate funds, and others may be able to provide other types of resources, such as legislative connections. All such resources may be valuable. Avoid including organizations that will not actively participate or make significant funding contributions, and simply wish to appear as names on the letters (with one exception – sometimes an organization is so prestigious that having their name associated with the alliance greatly enhances your credibility). Develop a budget and a working plan that makes clear what resources each organization will provide. Make sure you agree on how decisions will be made. For example, does everyone have a single vote, or do some organizations have a greater say because of their power and/or financial contribution?

#### Win victories and share credit appropriately

Seeing measurable and successful results is even more important to an alliance effort than to an effort conducted by a single organization. Groups that participate in an alliance need to see ongoing results and successes to continue to participate.

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Appropriately recognizing the efforts of participants is critical. If particular groups played more significant roles, then say so and do not leave anyone out. The alliance always makes the effort successful, not just one or two groups.

## **Understanding the Electorate and Consumers**

Market research is as important to activists as it is to Nike. While Nike spends millions conducting research on consumers, activists struggle with shoestring or non-existent budgets. This kind of research does not have to be an obstacle.

### News

Reading a wide variety of newspapers and scanning other media outlets can give activist organizers a sense of the electorate. For some new sources on the internet, check out these websites:

<http://www.newspaperlinks.com>

<http://www.yahoo.com:80/News/Newspapers/> (for U.S. and worldwide)

<http://www.amcity.com> (local business weeklies)

### Free news and news clipping services

Most cities have numerous alternative, free weeklies, which are all geared for particular peoples and communities: GLBT, youth, various neighborhoods, techies, African Americans, women, parents, alternative health, job seekers, etc. Sit down with a stack of them and read through. Pay attention to advertisers, want ads, letters to the editor, editorials, and to the news and feature articles. Note the names of, and develop relationships with, local reporters who cover news stories relevant to sexual freedom issues to use as future media contacts. These reporters are often looking for potential news sources, and they in return can provide leads, background information, and sometimes inside information on developments relevant to sexual freedom issues. In addition, as discussed in the media section of this Manual, a good working relationship with the local press may be an invaluable aid in effective issue advocacy.

For some free news clipping services on the internet, check out these websites:

<http://www.excite.com> (look for News, and then create a "My News Portfolio")

If you use America Online (AOL), then explore its service called "news Profiles"; keywords can be set up through the member's menu.

### Voting records in local elections

Another way to collect information about the community is to review voting records. Which neighborhoods have large numbers of registered voters? Which precincts tend to have heavy voter turnouts? The local or statewide League of Women Voters may keep track of this information, as do the local elections office

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and perhaps the public library. Like school board records, this information is public.

### Elected officials' voting records

In addition, the voting and legislative records of elected officials may also provide crucial information for developing an issue advocacy campaign. Again, the League of Women Voters often tracks these records, and so do many GLBT and reproductive rights lobbying groups. In some situations, organizers may want to identify particular legislation pertinent to sexual freedom issues and pull together the voting records of officials on those specific bills.

These websites track voting records on recent issues:

League of Women Voters, <http://www.lwv.org/>

NARAL Pro-Choice America (formally NARAL), <http://www.naral.org/>

People for the American Way (PFAW), <http://www.pfaw.org/>

Human Rights Campaign (HRC), <http://www.hrc.org/>

Project Vote Smart, <http://www.vote-smart.org>

For local voting records, you may have to check the city website, or visit city hall, the township building or the local library.

### Information concerning corporations

For organizers targeting corporations, an understanding of the company's customers and their spending patterns may be extremely valuable. For example, the Cendant Corporation informed its hotels in 2002 that they should no longer welcome alternative sexuality conventions in their Ramada and Howard Johnson hotel franchises. A quick calculation of the dollars spent by swing, BDSM, cross-dressing, and GLBT groups enabled the activists contesting this policy to estimate that the chain could lose substantial dollars each quarter due to this new policy. This fact proved to be an effective element of the successful campaign to persuade Cendant to clarify that its policy would not discriminate against sexually-oriented groups.

Corporate documents and filings may be obtained from the Secretary of State from each state, and information on public companies may be obtained from the SEC. Consumer groups and the Better Business Bureau (BBB) are also good resources. Property records and property tax records may be useful for both organizations and individuals. Voter registration records and city directories are good resources for researching individuals. Local newspapers are likely to keep a file on local companies or prominent individuals, and may let you review it. Information is also available in such publications as Dun and Bradstreet and Who's Who, or from paid online research services, such as LexisNexis. General information about major public and privately held corporations is available on a variety of websites. A website that could help is the Federal Securities and Exchange (SEC) Commission website: <http://www.sec.gov>.

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### News groups source

<http://www.dejanews.com> has a special search capability to help you find the news group you seek.

<http://www.onelist.com>

### Finding addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses

<http://www.switchboard.com>

<http://www.info-space.com>

## **Understanding Laws, Regulations and Procedures**

Understanding laws, regulations and procedures is critical to effective advocacy. For example, assume a situation in which a public body, such as a school board, is about to issue a rule forbidding mention of sexual issues in the classroom. The public body may be required to hold hearings, make certain findings, and to conform to other procedural requirements before any new rules are issued. Forcing the public body to adhere to these procedures may accomplish at least two objectives. First, it will delay the issuance of the objectionable rule. Second, it will force the public body to provide a forum for activists' opposition. Moreover, in some cases, the failure of a public body (or a corporation) to follow legally mandated procedures might be used as the basis for questioning their motives.

On the other hand, organizers must also respect procedures. Filing a written protest against a proposed rule change must be done in time; presenting testimony at a public hearing means signing up on the witness list at the right time; requesting information from public officials should go through the proper channels. Following procedures enhances the campaign's credibility and provides a structure for dialogue with public officials.

## **Reviewing the Calendar**

Timing is everything. Knowing important dates, such as when primary and general elections are held, is crucial to your campaign. Consider holidays, anniversaries, and special events that may be used to develop a timeline for an issue campaign. For example, the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* always sparks issue campaigns by both sides.

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## Oppositional Research

Finally, know thy enemy. First, you need to identify who will oppose you in your advocacy of each particular issue. We cannot overemphasize the importance of gaining intelligence information about the other side. Then, research is needed to determine the opposition's strengths and weaknesses. For example, when seeking to change zoning regulations, land developers are likely to be the constituency most concerned with these regulations. Knowing which developers oppose the issue is essential, and background research on each opposing developer may reveal the financial and political strengths and weaknesses of each company.

A good intelligence-gathering plan should be very specific. Fishing around in public documents can yield some amazing – and condemning – information, as Erin Brockovich found. However, doing research this way takes time and resources that many campaigns do not have. Outline the information needed, determine where the information might be found, and establish a timeline for the various research stages. For help identifying appropriate sources, begin by checking the local public library. Some college and university libraries may also help. Another excellent source of public information is in the federal, state, or city archives. Check first to see who else may have already done this same research. If it has not been done, then see if you can find a university student, journalist, or someone in an agency or foundation who may do this work for you. Research librarians can help find a good deal of information. Government agencies often keep extensive statistical and other research information easily accessible from regional offices or over the internet. Policy institutes and similar research or advocacy organizations frequently have voting records for candidates on various issues and a wide range of other data; they may have done reports on studies of your problem or related problems. You have the right to obtain information from most of these sources unless the data is business confidential, its disclosure would violate an individual's privacy, or it is classified for national security reasons.

The goal of intelligence gathering in some cases may be to find information that could discredit opposing individuals or organizations. Patterns may emerge that may demonstrate an official has lied or changed positions on issues, or failed to disclose information that might compromise him or her. Tracking individuals as they move through various public service appointments may yield results because it is not unusual for the same person to adopt different views, depending on the orientation of each different agency for which that person works.

Maintaining accurate and citable research records, keeping your research organized, and recording your sources are important. For books, this record means citing the full title of the book, the author(s), the place of publication, the

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publisher, the date of publication, and the page number. For public records, write down the government agency, the sub-division of the office, the record group, the volume, the date, the page number, and the person in charge of the agency (and subdivision if possible). Check with the librarian or archivist to make sure the information is correct. Make copies whenever possible.

When using the internet to gather information, beware of the date the information was uploaded. Old pages aren't necessarily inaccurate, but may no longer be applicable. Print every page that provides information, and make sure the complete URL and date appear on the page. Finally, remember that some websites are more reliable (and more likely to be recognized in a court of law or elsewhere as authoritative) than others are.

Several organizations have well-developed files on religious and socially conservative leaders and organizations. The Triangle Foundation (<http://tri.org>) in Michigan, for example, has extensive information on right-wing activities of interest to GLBT organizers. Policy institutes and activist organizations track the voting records of officials on various issues. In addition, some groups aggressively research campaign donations to candidates.

Social conservative groups, such as Concerned Women for America and the Traditional Values Coalition, have extensive websites. These groups spend a great deal of time and effort tracking and opposing the activities of sexual freedom advocates. Examining what the opposition is doing is fun, and may be valuable intelligence gathering. Sign up for newsletters and announcements distributed by these groups. Consider joining or sending in a small donation to receive more information about their activities.

For more information about researching candidates, positions and voting records, see Appendix A on page 69.

## **Evaluating Your Power to Conduct an Effective Direct Advocacy Campaign**

The success or failure of any issue advocacy campaign depends on whether you can generate sufficient power in support of your issue.

### **How Power Affects Issue Campaigns**

Power generally equates to money and/or large numbers of people. Most grassroots issue campaigns tend to have people rather than money. Winning consequently depends on organizing and using people more effectively than the better-financed opposition, and focusing such people-power on:

- depriving the other side of something it wants or needs (for example, depriving an elected official of votes).

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- giving the other side something it wants (for example, working to support an elected official's position on an issue of particular importance to them; helping him/her get re-elected).
- organizing to elect a candidate who supports your issues.

## **Evaluating Your Power**

Even though you may have large numbers of people and feel you are right, winning depends on directly pressuring decision-makers. If your opponents can apply more pressure, then they will win.

Here are some ways to address whether you have enough power to effect change in each of the following context:

### Legislative

The ability to change the law through lobbying elected and appointed officials depends on your ability to convince those officials that support of your position will benefit their election prospects. One way to accomplish this is by financial contributions, which is more likely to be your opponents' strengths than yours. Your potential strength will likely be your ability to turn out substantial numbers of voters who are passionate enough to base their vote on their views on this issue. You may also be able to generate media support or favorable media coverage of the issue.

Issue campaigns tend to be most effective preceding elections when controversial legislation is at stake. Understanding how the legislative body with which you are working makes decisions is important. Are they made in committee, on the floor, or by the leadership? Are you strong enough in the home districts of the leadership or in the districts of undecided legislators? If the decision is made on the floor, can you influence enough voting members for a majority?

Look at the election background of an elected legislator to determine how close the last election was for her or him. Is this seat typically contested? Evaluate the number of potential voters you have to rally to your cause in that district. Are there local organizations that might support your issue with this candidate? Are there particular people with influence over that candidate who might lobby on this issue, such as large donors, religious or opinion leaders, or leaders representing large voting blocks?

### The Courts and Regulatory Processes

Legal action may be effective in at least three ways. First, civil rights laws can often be used to obtain court orders to stop oppressive or discriminatory actions

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by government or corporate officials. Second, a law or regulation that itself is oppressive or discriminatory may be struck down by a lawsuit challenging its constitutionality. Finally, participation in the litigations of criminal prosecutions (or the threats thereof) may be useful. This can be a means of creating important legal precedents against laws that constitute repressive sex policies.

All types of legal action require that you either find volunteer lawyers, raise money for lawyers, or find a litigation-capable organization (for example, the ACLU) to take the case for you. Depending on the nature of the case, supporting the litigation by publicizing the issue in the media may be important. The litigation process generally takes several years. To determine the viability of such an action, you and your lawyers should evaluate how strongly the laws, regulations, or the Constitution support your position, and investigate if there are similar cases that have been successful elsewhere. Assessing the predisposition of the judge in a court litigation or of the agency officials in an administrative proceeding is important. Finally, make sure you understand the costs involved. You may be responsible for thousands of dollars in legal expenses even if the legal work is done pro bono.

### Boycotts

In appropriate circumstances, boycotts may be a powerful tactic. An effective boycott is aimed at either cutting profits or convincing the company of your ability to cut profits by persuading consumers to refuse to patronize because of the position of the company on your issue. Media coverage is particularly important here. Boycotts are most effective during times of corporate turmoil or change, or difficult financial times. Investigate who owns the company, their financial situation and profit margin, and their markets. Determine whether you can realistically impact profits negatively. A realistic estimate of prospects for success is of particular importance in the context of a planned boycott. A boycott that fizzles is a devastating blow to any hopes of vindicating your issue.

### Picketing

Picketing is often a useful way of pressuring decision-makers and of bringing an issue to the attention of the general public. Always retain legal advice on the permissible manner of picketing. It is important to remember that picketing frequently leads to violent incidents and all of your picketers should be warned of that risk.

### Disruptive actions

Acts of civil disobedience are the most extreme weapon in the issue advocacy arsenal and should be the last resort in almost every case. However, such disruptive actions may be very effective in gaining visibility on issues. In any civil

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disobedience campaign, you must be sure that you have people willing to get arrested and money to get them out of jail. The difficult question is whether such tactics will generate public sympathy or a hostile public reaction. Some part of the public will inevitably be adversely impacted by any disruptive action, and others will react unfavorably to your breaking the law. The overall public reaction will mostly depend on how carefully you structure the civil disobedience, and on how disciplined your participants are. If the TV-viewing public sees what appears to be an unruly, destructive group of demonstrators whose anger is not clearly focused on the issue, then the disruptive action will generate a hostile public response. On the other hand, if the demonstrators are calm, behave nonviolently and are clearly focused on the issue, and if the disruptive act is clearly symbolic and limited in nature, then the sight of police carrying away these sincere people may generate sympathetic outrage against the oppression that is the goal of civil disobedience.

## **Section 2: How to Implement Direct Action Issue Advocacy**

### **The Phases of a Model Issue Advocacy Campaign**

Each issue campaign proceeds through a series of steps. The following tactics assume an extended issue campaign. Tactics in shorter campaigns are less involved and detailed.

First, choose an issue and develop a strategy. The people involved determine the issue, which is how they agree to solve the problem or partially solve the problem. This issue may be broad or narrow in definition. Strategy development, which is discussed in the next section on page 28, involves evaluating the decision-maker's assets and liabilities against yours, and developing a strategy that makes you more powerful.

Issue campaigns should start with reasonable dialogues with the governmental or corporate decision-maker. Arguments are presented and discussed at a meeting where it is important for the decision-maker to understand the "power" you have. This meeting is best done in person, and having a small group of selected individuals rather than one person may be advantageous. However, having too many representatives is clumsy and ineffective. Your issue may be resolved at this meeting. If not, then the campaign proceeds.

Identifying the person who makes the decisions on your issue is important. If you cannot establish a decision-maker, then your issue has not been properly defined. Although this decision-maker represents an institution, her or his personal views and self-interests may differ from those of other members of that institution. An example would be someone who might want to run for office or higher office, and whose political stance on an issue may differ from the institution. This difference can be used to your advantage.

You are now ready to announce the campaign. This announcement is frequently done through some type of media event where those who have worked on the effort talk about the issue and their efforts to resolve it. Including studies and scientific information is helpful. The impact of such an event is enhanced if you have one or more speakers who have suffered the oppression or discrimination that you protest. If this event is done as a coalition or alliance with other groups, then all members should agree in advance on the announcement.

Outreach to others to increase visibility should start immediately. This opportunity gets your message to new people. If this effort is local, then individuals and local organizations should be asked to participate. If this effort is statewide or national, then larger and national groups may be enlisted. Speakers may be sent to various community groups, such as the Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA), neighborhood associations, or churches. In small cities

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and towns, this outreach may be used as a media opportunity. Petitions may also be an effective way to relay your message and to gain support. This phase should culminate in a large public event, such as a public forum on the issue, with media coverage.

It is now time for a second meeting with decision-makers. You should evaluate carefully and understand what power you have before this meeting. You are likely to have more leverage with elected officials than appointed officials, and more influence over government than private companies. Including secondary decision-makers is also helpful. For example, if the Mayor is the decision-maker, then targeting City Council members (if you have a strong constituency and where Council members' records indicate they support your issue) may be helpful. They, in turn, will apply added pressure to the Mayor.

Hold a series of meetings with secondary decision-makers and build momentum. Each meeting is an opportunity for media coverage. Such meetings may be used to present petitions, and may be confrontational in nature. They may include diplomatically phrased "veiled threats" that include major, negative media coverage or potential legal action.

Incrementally building momentum and support for the issue and for the group of individuals involved in the effort is important. The core group and volunteer staff should continue to grow, and events and exposure should continue to increase in size. Celebrating any small victory with events, such as a picnic or other gathering, is useful. These events not only build strength among participants, but also are media opportunities.

If this campaign involves an election cycle, then that fact presents an opportunity for increased visibility and support for your issue. Several things you can do are:

- Meet with candidates and ask their position on this issue.
- Ask officials already supportive to advocate this issue in their campaign literature if it is a broad enough issue to win votes.
- Hold a "candidates night" by inviting political candidates; ask them to take a position on the issue. This is also a media opportunity.
- Conduct voter registration campaigns in key districts.
- Work to endorse or oppose a candidate. (Note, however, that restrictions apply for certain types of organizations, such as tax-exempt non-profits, that limit or restrict lobbying and candidate endorsements.)

After a series of build-up meetings with secondary targets, meet again with the decision-maker. The tone of this meeting may be one of negotiation or confrontation. This meeting will result in winning, compromising or losing. If you lose, then escalating tactics is necessary. Holding public demonstrations, organizing picketing or a boycott, escalating the issue from the local to state

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level, or mounting an electoral campaign to oust the decision-maker may be appropriate.

With this overview in mind of what an issue advocacy campaign will comprise, we turn now to a more detailed examination of its key elements:

## **Strategy Development**

People frequently confuse the terms “strategy” and “tactics”. For example, one might refer to a “legal strategy” in discussion, but this reference is actually to a tactic. In direct action issue campaign organizing, a strategy is defined as a program to compel a business leader or government official to do something related to public interest that would not normally happen. A tactic is a specific action taken to implement that strategy.

Strategy development combines the plan for the campaign with the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the decision-maker, opponents, and allies. It is the blueprint of a structural plan that will give you the result you want by changing the balance of power.

### How to develop a strategy evaluation outline

Once an issue is chosen, the group should meet to develop a strategy. Here is what you should have on hand and who you should invite.

- A map of the city or area
- A map or overlay of the map outlining political districts
- Election returns for related races over the past few years (to understand voting patterns)
- The yellow pages to find allies and opponents
- Someone who understands how the electoral body you are targeting works
- Someone who knows the major businesses in the area
- A list of interested participants/supporters and allies

Outlining the strategy and filling in the components will probably take several hours or longer. If group is large, then breaking into smaller groups and working independently may be useful. Afterward, consolidate the information into a final strategy document. Five basic components are present in the strategy outline: goals, resources, supporters/allies/opponents, decision-makers and tactics. Place these five categories in a chart (see page 12). The following describes how to chart each category.

### Goals column

To develop an action campaign, organizers must first identify long-term movement goals. Long-term goals are the end results for which you wish, and this campaign may only be a part of the progress to achieve them. Several strategies for achieving those goals must be considered for achieving those goals and weighed against the usefulness of a variety of tactics to create the necessary pressure on decision-makers.

An example of a long-term goal of a sexual freedom campaign in the City of Baltimore, MD was to modify the zoning codes. This campaign began in late 1999 as a result of Baltimore's department of zoning closure of three social and educational venues for consenting adults to learn and practice safely BDSM activities, citing them as adult entertainment venues operating without proper licensing. Sexual freedom political activists met, organized, and developed a successful strategy. The long-term goal was to change the zoning regulations to legalize BDSM activities in any venue in Baltimore.

The hallmark of a well-planned campaign is flexibility, which allows organizers to adjust to sudden changes without forcing them to abandon long-term goals. Furthermore, goals should always be measurable. When will you know you've won? How will you measure it?

### *Intermediate goals*

An intermediate goal is the result you hope to achieve in this specific campaign. In the Baltimore City sexual freedom campaign, the intermediate goal of the sexual freedom activists was to obtain zoning permission to allow BDSM activities in private club settings.

### *Short-term goals*

Short-term goals are ones that make progress toward the intermediate goal. In a lengthy campaign, establishing short-term goals is advisable. Small victories will build support and power, and will help participants feel successful. An example of a short-term goal from the City of Baltimore campaign was to gain notice in the Mayor's office. This visibility was accomplished through a letter-writing campaign and "packing the room" at a benefit honoring the Mayor.

### Resources/considerations column

Good organizers know how to employ the available resources economically and efficiently. Resources include people, their skills and time, as well as tangible goods and funds. Even if the campaign is run on a shoestring budget and everyone is committed to investing time as a volunteer, some funding will be needed. This budget requires a way to handle and process money, possibly

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through formation of an organization of some type (see “Other Legal and Financial Considerations” on page 45).

Evaluate staff resources and time available to contribute. Be sure that participants understand the time expectations relative to their commitment. Highlight specific assets of any staff person, such as “lobbyist” or “good public speaker.” Identify any costs expected for the campaign.

Establish what you want to achieve from a resource development standpoint. For example, raise X amount of money and establish a structure to do future issue campaigns.

Evaluate problems that may occur. Do working relationship issues exist between participants? Does a division in your constituency need to be handled delicately? Does a rivalry exist between your two largest allies?

### Supporters/Allies/Opponents Column

Your supporters are people who will actually participate in the campaign and effort. In defining potential supporters, try to think outside the box. The more broadly framed the issue, the more potential supporters you will have. Start with people you know would be interested, and think from where other support may come. You do not need large numbers to begin. Most efforts start out small and grow as momentum builds. Although these people are individual supporters, try to think of constituent groups that have people who may be supporters, such as the PTSA, neighborhood associations, etc., so that you can target groups and save time.

Allies are people who will support your effort and position. Thinking outside the box is also important in this area. Some allies are more likely to support your sexual freedom issue, such as the ACLU, local gay and lesbian community centers, GLBT advocacy groups, HIV/AIDS service providers, educational and social groups for alternative sexual expression communities, adult businesses, and groups organized to advance civil liberties or sexual freedom issues. You should not limit your thinking to this small group. If your issue is framed broadly enough, then you should be able to find “hooks” to gain support from a variety of places. An example of this type of ally-building occurred in a sexual freedom campaign in Washington, D.C. that started in 1999 to eliminate a section of the Alcohol Regulations that prohibited erotic fondling, flagellation, and nudity. Support from the major GLBT advocacy group in the area, the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA, <http://www.glaa.org>) came early on and helped to gain other allies. Bars and clubs where dancing was prevalent joined the cause because the regulation was so vague that most dancing would be illegal. A conservative citizen’s association joined because the law was so vague it could be interpreted to make sex illegal between married couples in hotel rooms.

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## Opponents

In the opponents category, list everyone who will be unhappy with the results when you win. How do you compare with each on strengths and weaknesses? How powerful are they? Try to evaluate what their reaction and response will be. Do not engage in debate with the opposition because it is a diversion that has no return benefit. If they are better financed than you, then they will want to waste your time; they can afford it, you can't.

## Decision-makers column

Decision-makers are people who can give you what you want or strongly influence it. Even if the decision-maker is an institution, such as a City Council, identifying the actual people you will be persuading is still beneficial. People make decisions, not institutions. Your supporters will find a campaign to change a person's mind much more winnable than a campaign against an institution.

List everyone possible who could influence this decision. Having multiple decision-maker targets and involving secondary decision-makers are useful because power is often shared. This list is particularly important in lengthy campaigns to build momentum. A secondary decision-maker is more influential with the decision-maker than you are, and one over whom you have more power than the primary decision-maker.

## Tactics column

Tactics should be considered as part of an overall strategy, not separately.

Each tactic should have:

- A person who does it
- A person to whom something is done
- A reason why the person to whom you are doing would dislike it enough to concede if you stop

Tactics should be carried out with the experience level of the individuals involved and be fun. Organizers should choose tactics that fit the strategy, resources and philosophy of the campaign. An example of a tactic for sexual freedom advocacy comes from the Bisexual Resource Center located in Boston. One of their goals is to abolish state laws criminalizing sodomy (the *Lawrence* decision still requires implementation). Each year, to raise funds and awareness of the issue, they sponsor a sodomy drive, which is similar to a walk-a-thon. Each participant gets her or his friends to pledge a specific amount of money each time the participant commits an act of sodomy during the pledge month.

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Here are some details of typical tactics:

### *Media events*

Media events are opportunities to be creative, have fun, and acquire good visibility and support for your issue. Making an initial announcement is always appropriate, and releasing pertinent studies is also a good media event. Make it fun, even visual, to make your point.

### *Actions*

An action involves people making specific demands and expecting an immediate response. This tactic is useful during the early and middle stages of the campaign and helps to build campaign momentum by achieving a visible result. It may be as simple as insisting on a meeting with an official to discuss your issue and asking for a commitment, such as investigating the issue or raising the issue at a city council meeting.

### *Public Hearings*

You can ask for a public hearing, but we suggest holding your own. This way, your experts can speak and present the issue while also being a good opportunity to educate others and the media on your issue. It will help you establish credibility as a group on this issue.

### *Accountability Meetings*

Accountability meetings are large meetings that you sponsor where large numbers of people demand an immediate response from an elected official.

### *Elections*

Even if you cannot endorse candidates because of your legal structure, you will still have more influence shortly before an election. They are more likely to endorse or support your issue if you represent a substantial group of voters.

### *Negotiations*

Negotiations are the way most issue campaigns end

### *Using the strategy outline, plan the issue campaign*

Starting from left to right, fill out each column. Goals are something you win from someone. Tactics are done by someone (the supporters) to someone (the decision-makers) to achieve your goals.

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### *Timeline*

To complete the plan, develop timelines with names of individuals responsible. It will help the group be more realistic about what it can accomplish. Include major campaign events and electoral process events, as well as when legislators are in session and when they are home.

### **How to Develop Tactics to Support Your Strategy**

Tactics need to be developed in the context of the strategy. What may be an effective tactic for one campaign may be ineffective for another because of the difference in strategies. Tactics have no context outside of a strategy.

Here are the basic criteria for a good tactic:

- It focuses on the primary or secondary decision-makers, not others.
- It gives a specific demand-power over the decision-makers.
- It meets both the issue and resource goals.
- It is new to the decision-maker.
- It is within your group's experience and they are favorable toward it.

### **Considerations Related to Common Tactics**

#### Petitions

Petitions may be effective and provide a good organizing tool by the process of collecting signatures. The strongest petition includes a statement on which people are willing to vote based on your issue, and the completed petition is presented to the issue decision-maker in person with media coverage. Petitions are strongest and most effective when presented during the pre-election cycle.

Petitions are effective because of:

- Numbers of signatures
- The appeal of the issue presented
- Effective preparation of the media
- Timing and location of presentation
- Organized follow-up

#### Suggestions for Petitions

- Keep it short and simple for people to read easily.
- Do ten to twelve signatures per page to make the volume of paper look larger for the media.
- Don't waste time educating each person in detail.

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- Ask people who sign to volunteer.
- Go in teams to make it more fun. Meet back as a group and talk about what happened.
- Make copies for future use before presenting the petition to the decision-maker

### Writing letters

Letter writing works for the same reasons as petitions. A letter has more impact than a signature on a petition, however, because it requires more time and effort on the part of the writer. Letters that are individually written, especially handwritten, as opposed to form letters, have more impact. Prior to a meeting with an official, gather lots of letters sent to you. Send half in before the meeting and bring the other half with you. Letter-writing campaigns work well at meetings in which groups of people participate.

### Suggestions for Letter-Writing Campaigns

Prepare a sample letter of a few sentences and put it on a clipboard along with the decision-maker's name and address. Let people use this as a basis, but tell them to write it in their own words. Bring a laptop computer to let people dictate letters.

Ask the writer to include a return address so they will receive a reply and remain involved.

Ask each person to address an envelope and tell them you will mail them. Ask whether they would make a contribution for postage. Collect the letters and mail them. If you don't get the letters, then they most likely will never be sent.

Sell buttons or tee shirts while you are doing letter-writing campaigns.

Spread the letters out over a week when you mail them. They will be noticed more.

A letter-writing table should ideally include three people – one behind the table and two in front working the crowd.

### Meetings with Public Officials

This tactic is one of the most effective. If possible, get 15-25 people to attend the meeting. Have a substantial number of supporting letters from the official's district. If possible, try to meet with elected, rather than appointed, officials. If you have enough voter support, then the official will not be able to avoid meeting

with you. Bear in mind that the official probably does not want to have this meeting with you.

### Suggestions for Meetings With Public Officials

Bring people who have been involved or volunteered in the past. Bringing new volunteers to this meeting is a not a good idea, except where the new person has a relationship with, or ability to influence, the official.

Choose one spokesperson and one or two other individuals who may highlight certain areas. Other people should not speak unless questions are asked of them, but should be introduced along with the group/constituency they represent. Write a list of brief talking points in bulleted form for all of your participants, and prepare a package to leave with the official. Rehearse in advance and plan counter responses for what you think the official's response/position will be.

Understand the elected official's current position. How close was the last election? When is the next election cycle?

Ask for something specific, but come prepared to ask for a secondary option as a fallback position.

Outline your strengths. Highlight numbers of people, allies, prominent and influential individuals, and major donors to their campaign who support you.

Point out how this issue is in the best interest of the community. Explain that if they do not proceed on your path, then they demonstrate their lack of concern for community issues and the public's interest.

If any special interest group is influencing the official on this issue, then you should plan in advance how to counter the influence. If any special interest group is making significant campaign contributions, then diplomatically suggest that "exposure" of this issue to the public through the media may not be in the official's best interests. Of course, present negative media exposure as something unfortunate that you would prefer to avoid, but that you would be forced to do if this issue could not be resolved between the official and you.

**TRY TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT.** Try to get a commitment from the official on something specific related to your campaign. If you can't, then ask for a second meeting.

Say thank you and follow-up in writing. This correspondence is your opportunity to document your version of the meeting as a written record, reiterate key points, and add anything that may have slipped through the cracks during the meeting. Make sure it says what you want and highlights what you and the official agreed

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on. Depending on the circumstances and outcome of the meeting, you may consider including the media and/or others on the follow-up correspondence.

### Public Hearings

Public hearings are another effective tactic. Although holding your own hearing and participating in an official hearing are both effective tactics, we suggest that holding your own hearing is often the best approach for sexual freedom issues.

The benefits of holding your own hearing are:

- It is an excellent forum for your issue because you control it.
- It establishes credibility for your group effort and shows that your group is an expert on the issue.
- It shows large numbers of people supporting your issue.
- It is an outreach opportunity to increase community visibility and involvement.
- It is fun, relatively easy, and provides a good training experience for your leaders.
- It is an opportunity to highlight prominent supporters or donors by letting them testify or participate on a panel.
- It is likely to have media coverage.

You must have good attendance for public hearings to be effective. In major issue campaigns, at least 100+ must attend. Recruiting adequate attendance numbers is a key element of success. The hearing should last no more than two hours and must allow time for public comment and dialogue. Although your goal is to pressure an elected official to attend, you can hold a successful hearing even if the official does not show by having good panelists and testimony. If the official does not attend, then you have the opportunity to highlight this absence to the media.

Take enough time to write the testimony and rehearse it. It is most effective if people state what large constituency they represent and tell their own stories about why this issue is important to them. Make sure all of your major points are covered in the testimony.

Decorate the room to make it attractive to attendees and the TV. Displaying banners and signs for participating groups may be helpful.

Save your strongest and most rousing speaker for last. End the meeting by announcing the next campaign step and some type of call to action.

### Practical Suggestions for Your Own Public Hearing

The purpose of the meeting is to present your case, and not to provide all of the possible views on the issue.

Don't pick a space that is too large. Pick a space that not only will be packed, but also will leave some folks standing in the back. Take out extra chairs rather than have empty seats.

Have a press person who distributes your press release and points reporters to the appropriate spokespeople.

People representing organizations, with a few individuals selected in addition, should give testimony.

Obtain contact information for attendees.

Bring letters or petitions from people unable to attend. Read any messages of support from allies or prominent individuals. Do a voter registration campaign in the back of the room.

### Practical Suggestions for Participating in Official Public Hearings

With adequate voter support, getting an official public hearing is usually possible. In some cases, you may have a legal right to ask for a public hearing on an issue. Although decision-makers frequently ignore these hearings, they still provide a useful forum to advance your campaign.

Try to hold the hearing where and when your supporters can attend. Government hearings are typically held in a downtown area starting at 9 a.m. As a first step, insist on holding the hearing during the evening in your largest area of support because attendance may be maximized to your advantage.

If you are forced to do the hearing downtown in the morning, then try to get on the agenda as early as possible. The media do not usually stay long, and supporters become tired after a few hours and leave. Check what the agenda requirements are because you may have to register well in advance to present public testimony.

Hearings can be boring, and people get bored easily. Consider holding some group activity, such as a demonstration, media event, or just a simple "rah, rah rally," before the hearing until it is time for the testimony.



Use tactics that make political points and are humorous, but tasteful. In the Washington, D.C. hearings before the Alcohol Beverage and Control Board in December 2002, the GLAA testified using humorous examples of specific theater scenes to demonstrate that all but one of the plays currently showing in DC, including Shakespeare's, would violate the proposed new ABC regulations related to sexual conduct in alcohol venues.

Have copies of written testimony available for the media, the record, and attendees.

Find out what relevance this hearing actually has for the regulations or laws. Will it provide a basis for some type of future legal action, or does it provide a vehicle for delay?

Avoid a confrontation with your opponents in front of the media. If you wish to gain media attention, then try to plan it around an activity, or at a time and place, where your opponents are unlikely to be. Otherwise, your message is likely to get lost and confused.

Have some visual way to identify all of your supporters with stickers, pins, or tee shirts.

Set up a table with literature outside the room or building, or stand with a clipboard as people approach the hearing to tell them about your issue. You may pick up added support from other attendees.

Prepare a simple and easy-to-read fact sheet about who you are, the issue, and what you want. Have a similar press statement that also includes quotes that highlight your issue.

Use large signs to gain high visibility.

Have a couple of people who can generate applause when certain speakers testify. If open questions are allowed, then give supporters index cards with a question or comment that highlights a certain point, and have multiple people ask those questions or state the comments.

If the audience is supportive enough and decision-makers are there, then you may want to ask for a vote from the floor. If it is refused, then the refusing official looks bad, not you.

### Demonstrations

If you can get mass attendance, then demonstrations may be effective. However, they are labor-intensive and each demonstration must increase in size,

or it will appear that you are losing support. You can, however, generally pull-off one successful mass demonstration, and your reputation will be established and you will not have to repeat one for a long time.

You need to select carefully a location where traffic will help energize the demonstration. Be careful not to overestimate attendance to the public and media, or your credibility could be hurt and could be used against you.

Make the demonstration colorful and active to ensure TV coverage. Be sure that your colorful activities or participants, however, relate directly to your issue.

Obey relevant laws and regulations. Ensure that your demonstrators are sincere and well behaved.

### Accountability Sessions

You set the agenda at these meetings and invite an elected official to attend. It is one of the most effective tactics that a grassroots group can employ. A large number of supporters attend; individuals provide information and tell the official what they want him/her to do. A pre-selected group asks the official for something specific and expects an immediate response. It is essential to understand the elected officials' current electoral status and history, and to have large numbers of people attend (100+). This tactic is most effective if the official is vulnerable politically and facing a difficult re-election. Furthermore, if your supporters always vote for the party that opposes the official, then you will have less leverage. This very effective tactic is relatively easy for new groups to pull off.

### Educational meetings and seminars

These meetings and seminars should be viewed not only as opportunities to educate, but also as publicity opportunities and a demonstration of your strength. You can present your views through qualified panelists. Someone should overview the issue and effort, and inform people how to become involved. Give everyone an action to do after they leave.

### Boycotts

While boycotts are popular among activists, they are rarely effective against national or international products. A local business is much more vulnerable to a boycott. Like strikes, they can be an effective threat. You must, however, be prepared to carry out any threat you make if your demands are not met. Therefore, we recommend only boycotts of local businesses.

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### Disruptive tactics that are legal

Tactics such as picket lines should be focused on a specific target. They are designed to increase visibility and impact the target in a negative financial way by reducing business. Check the local laws to see whether a specific disruptive tactic is legal.

### Civil disobedience and arrest

Civil disobedience is different than violence. It is doing something that is morally right, and either is illegal (or interpreted as illegal by authorities) or challenges the illegitimate authority or immoral actions of the state. Remember that civil disobedience results in some of your supporters facing criminal misdemeanor charges. The whole idea is to make the public angry at the government's mistreatment of the demonstrators. Civil disobedience is useful only as part of an overall strategy. It is effective if you have large numbers of people and can demonstrate your ability to create a negative economic impact, such as slowing or stopping traffic and causing work delays. As an organizer, you should consider that this tactic makes many people uncomfortable and may work against you by decreasing your support. You should engage in this tactic only if your supporters are comfortable with it. If you engage in this tactic, then you should provide other ways for supporters who are uncomfortable with this approach to participate.

### Common tactics used by the other side

Your opponents will try to divide your effort or coalition. A common divide-and-conquer tactic they use is making statements to a particular member of the group or coalition, such as, "We can resolve this problem with you because you are reasonable and the other folks aren't." This tactic creates disharmony within your campaign if they discuss a different position with you than with the group.

They will tell you they want to negotiate very early in the campaign before it has become public knowledge. This negotiation is frequently done as a delaying tactic and usually does not result in success because you have not yet established your power. They will suggest that media coverage and public disclosure is not appropriate as long as negotiations are ongoing. Have some power established first in your level of voter support before agreeing to any such negotiation. You may want to wait to raise media visibility until later in the campaign if a sincere effort to negotiate a satisfactory outcome is underway; this "veiled threat" of negative media gives you negotiating leverage.

They may invite you to participate in a "high-level" special committee or series of meetings that focus on developing legislation for broader issues that might somehow relate to your issue. This invitation is supposed to "keep you quiet" for

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the time being, and your issue may be excluded from the legislation. This process, however, may be useful as long as you disclose prior to joining the committee that you are a part of this citizen group, and plan to disclose everything that occurs at the meetings.

They will tell you they are not the right person and refer you to someone else, who refers you to someone else again. Within government, “passing the buck” is easy. This situation happens most frequently when dealing with appointed officials. If it happens, then call a meeting with everyone who has told you they are not the right person. If this move fails, then talk with your City Council member or elected official.

### **Turning Capitalism Against Itself – How to Deal with Corporations that Oppress or Discriminate**

On some occasions, your activism will be directed at corporations, rather than governments. This activism will be directed at problems such as:

- A company’s personnel policies discriminate against sexual minorities.
- Companies that deal with the public (retailers, hotels/motels, restaurants/bars, transportation companies, etc.) discriminate against practitioners of alternative sexuality.
- Media corporations (newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, etc.) take public positions against sexual communities or sexual practices.

In a number of ways, dealing with corporations is more difficult than dealing with governments:

- Anti-discrimination laws are less helpful in dealing with corporations than governments. Many forms of discrimination practiced by private parties are not illegal.
- Companies generally have better and tougher in-house lawyers than governments have.
- In many cases, senior corporate officials are conservative in their social and political views.

On the other hand, corporations are always sensitive to threats to their income, particularly the loss of customers. Furthermore, some (not all) corporations are sensitive about their public image. These focal points put together are effective pressures on a corporation. Tactics that may be effective against corporations include:

- litigation or threat of litigation if the company’s discrimination or other oppressive practice is at least arguably illegal;
- taking the issue to the media;
- boycotting the company’s product or service if you have a sufficiently large group or can generate sufficient public sympathy;

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- picketing corporate offices, or more visible places, where the corporation interacts with the public.

Corporation campaigns must be carefully planned and implemented. Make sure you do your homework in at least five ways:

1. Know your legal position. Is the corporation's action illegal? If so, then you can threaten to sue or go to a regulatory agency. You may have to consult a lawyer, but often you can retain advice from a national civil rights group, such as the ACLU or the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.
2. Research the company's attitudes. Are they liberal, conservative or neither? Are they active on public issues? Have they recently been sued for discrimination, for environmental problems, for fraud, etc.? Companies with a recent history of lawsuits or scandals are more likely to avoid more bad publicity. Read their most recent annual report, perform a LexisNexis search on the company, or check the bios of senior corporate officials in Who's Who or similar publications.
3. Identify corporate officials in marketing or business operations who are most directly involved with the part of the company (specific store, hotel, etc.) where the problem occurred. You want to go directly to those people—not the company's lawyers—as your initial point of contact.
4. Try to find points of pressure in the company's current or upcoming activities – opening of a new store or restaurant, bringing out a new product or model, etc. Companies are particularly anxious to avoid bad publicity at these junctures, and a threat of picketing or a media onslaught at such times may be particularly effective.
5. Finally, assess your power to raise concerns on the part of corporate management. This power is primarily a function of two factors: how bad can you make the company look, and with how many lost customers you can credibly threaten? The former factor depends on the nature of the company's discriminatory or oppressive action, and the extent to which the people affected by that action will generate public sympathy. The latter factor turns first on the size of your own constituency, and second on the extent to which you can credibly argue that one (or more) much larger constituencies will feel threatened by the company's action or policy. For example, in the successful effort to change Baltimore's zoning laws, the group directly affected by the city's action was a relatively small community of largely heterosexual BDSM practitioners. However, they were able to generate a legitimate concern in the city's much larger gay community that they, too, were threatened by zoning laws. Although this

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example refers to a governmental effort, the same approach is effective in raising corporate concern about loss of customers.

Begin a corporate campaign by making direct contact with corporate management. As previously noted, pick a managerial-level person who is high on the chain-of-command responsible for the business activity in which the protested activity occurs. Do not contact the company's lawyers, and insist on continuing to deal with the business managers even if they bring in their lawyers.

At the initial conference call or meeting, state that you assume the terrible action of which you complain is not consistent with corporate policy, and that you are sure that they will want to end the practice now that you have brought it to their attention. Your purpose, you should say, is to avoid having to go to the media, begin picketing, organizing a boycott, or even taking the issue to court. Even if you are absolutely sure that the company's management knows exactly what is going on and even approves of the discriminatory practice, you are tactically better off by adopting an initially cooperative tone. If necessary, you can express shock and outrage when, and if, they give a belligerent response.

The most important substantive points to make in your initial meeting and conference call are:

- a) the company's practices are terribly wrong and harmful (illegal, if you can say that),
- b) bringing this issue to the media would be greatly detrimental to the company,
- c) your constituency—and those broader constituencies that will feel threatened by the company policy—includes large numbers of consumers of the company's products/services, but
- d) you are prepared to work out a reasonable solution if they will abandon their policy or practice.

In your first meeting or conference call, press hard for agreement on a resolution of the issue. In most cases, you will be pushing for a corporate apology and a public commitment never to do it again. If necessary, you may back off the demand for an apology as part of an agreement on a public commitment to end the policy or practice.

If you cannot reach an agreement during the first session, then you must make a judgment call whether to proceed further with discussion. At least one further session would be desirable, but it is important that the corporation be prevented from using the discussions as a stall tactic.

If the discussions above are not productive, then you will need to choose among the tactics discussed earlier: litigation (if legally sound), picketing, boycott and/or a media campaign. The media should in almost all cases be your first step by

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urging the press to do stories on the discriminatory or oppressive practice. The media campaign will often be enough to bring the company to an agreement; in severe cases, however, picketing and/or a boycott may be considered.

When, and if, you succeed in obtaining a company commitment to discontinue the practice, the company will generally want to coordinate their press release with yours. At this point, being conciliatory pays as long as the company clearly and publicly commits themselves to end the practice. It will be apparent to your community and to the world at large that this commitment is a victory for your organization; you don't need to crow or embarrass the corporation. You will have plenty of time later to gain publicity for your victory.

### **Organizational Issues: Creating the Vehicle for an Issue Advocacy Campaign**

We noted earlier in this manual that you may prefer to create a separate, ad hoc organization to focus on the specific issue that will be the subject of the advocacy campaign, rather than a campaign by already-existing groups or organizations. That ad hoc organization may be informal or, in more significant campaigns, may have a formal, legal structure for those requiring substantial fundraising.

Many aspects of creating a formal organization should be discussed with an attorney. However, the following brief discussion provides some useful general guidelines:

- The initial step is to organize a core group of people who want to be actively involved in this effort. Even if your group of core participants is an ad hoc committee, some form of structure is needed to manage money and to make sure that things get done. Formation of local, grassroots, sexual freedom efforts to perform direct action issue campaigns is relatively new, and they frequently start as informal meetings and discussions focused on the problem(s) and potential solutions. If monies raised are expected to be small, then you may be able to process the funds through another organization as a project, rather than establishing your own organization. A specific individual may alternatively have a sufficient level of confidence from the members of the group to collect and process funds. However, adopting a formal organizational structure is a good choice in many cases, and becomes necessary at some point if the campaign continues for any extended period. Having a formally organized entity also serves to give your effort added credibility. Creating a formal organization is not hard, so we suggest that you address the organizational issues early in the process.
- Coalitions of groups where each group has equal voting rights are complicated structures and frequently ineffective. We therefore do not normally recommend this type of organizational structure or address it in this

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handbook. We do, however, discuss building alliances or coalitions on your issue with other groups, which is an extremely important component of success in issue advocacy campaigns. (See “Creating and Maintaining a Successful Alliance” on page 17.)

- From a legal (especially tax law) standpoint, the type of organizational structure you choose will largely depend on the nature and magnitude of your issue and on the tactics you plan to employ. For example, if you are filing a lawsuit, you can create a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. However, if you are trying to change the law by influencing legislation, legislators or elections, then you need a different type of organization, and monies are not tax-exempt. This point is discussed in more depth below.
- Even when the group is in its early ad hoc stages, you will need to establish timelines, who is responsible for what, and communication procedures. You need to select a name, and you should create a website for the effort, even if it is very simple. You should also develop at least one piece of informational material, like a pamphlet or flyer about the group and the issue. You also need to develop a budget and fundraising plan.

Here are points to consider when developing your organization:

1. What is the purpose or mission of the group? Is it to change the law? If so, are you attempting to change legislation or do you plan to file a lawsuit?
2. Who are your members or supporters? What level of involvement will they have in helping with work and donating money?
3. Where will your money come from? How much do you need? Who will raise it? Will you choose a tax status that allows lobbying or endorsing candidates, but is not tax-exempt? How will that impact funding?
4. What is your geographic area? If it is large, such as a state, then will you have regional chapters responsible for doing work in designated localities? Who will support and manage each area of the geography? How will the statewide organization exercise control over the local groups?

### **Types of Not-for-Profit Organizations to Consider**

The following is a brief overview of the different types of organizational structures you should consider for your effort, with particular attention to the tax consequences of each structure. Clearly understanding the details and differences before making a decision is important.



We recommend incorporating for any group to limit the liability of directors and officers. The type of corporation suited to your issue campaign, however, depends on the type of activity you will pursue. From the standpoint of raising money, being a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code is advantageous. The IRS, however, places strict restrictions on the types of things a 501(c)(3) can do. If you are only educating, conducting research, or pursuing legal action through the court, then you can qualify as a 501(c)(3). On the other hand, if you plan to lobby or endorse candidates, then you cannot qualify as a tax-exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)(3). If you plan to lobby elected officials, but not endorse candidates or parties, then you should incorporate as a 501(c)(4). If you want to endorse candidates or parties, you should incorporate as a Political Action Committee [PAC 527(e)(1)]. Groups that form around an issue, and then grow may elect to add different types of corporations to their umbrella organization so they can expand their activities. Thus, the umbrella group may be a 501(c)(4) with lobbying done by that corporation. A subsidiary 501(c)(3) may be added for fundraising reasons, and the subsidiary will conduct research, education, and litigation functions. Be aware, however, that there are important restrictions on how one corporation exercises control over another, and particularly on how funds may be passed from one company to another. Check <http://www.fec.gov/law/feca.pdf> to review incorporation policies and consult an attorney specializing in tax law.

### **Other Legal and Financial Considerations**

Bylaws are an important subject on which to focus to avoid internal disputes and problems. Be sure they are clear. WFF will be happy to provide you with a copy of our bylaws for either our C3 (Foundation) or our C4 (Federation) to use as an example. You should also try to obtain a copy of a similar organization's bylaws within your state.

You will need to follow certain corporate procedures, such as recording minutes and filing annual reports with the local corporation commission. You will also need to obtain certain licenses to operate and raise funds, and should understand any special licensing requirements in your geography.

Money is always an issue for not-for-profit organizations, and raising funds for sexual freedom issues is difficult because they are socially provocative. Plan a conservative budget that leaves some monies available, and develop a contingency plan if you do not meet your fundraising goals. Although grassroots efforts can be quite effective even on a small budget, you will still need monies for copying, postage, incorporation and licensing fees, and directors and officers' insurance. Having both an attorney and a CPA on the board of an organization can be helpful. Establish procedures to control money and expenses, and conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principals. Be familiar with the appropriate corporate and financial records you need to maintain.

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If you are incorporated, then the board of directors still has a legal and moral responsibility for the organization. The board needs to understand clearly its legal responsibilities. We recommend that any corporation obtain directors' and officers' insurance.

If you plan to lobby, then you may or may not need to register formally as a lobbying organization; the rules for registering are complicated and differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. You should check the requirements of your jurisdiction. Registering may be advantageous, even if it is not required, in order to gain visibility and credibility as a valid lobbying organization. The burdens imposed by registration are not great, consisting primarily of keeping track of the time and expenditures spent on lobbying particular issues. Remember, however, that the purpose of lobbying registration and reporting is to enable the public to know who is lobbying whom on what issues. In Washington, D.C. and in state capitols, the press regularly check the lobbying reports. Those of your members who engage in lobbying should therefore be prepared for their lobbying activities to become public knowledge. On some sensitive sexual freedom issues, you may find that this situation poses a problem for some of your people.

### **Issue Organizations vs. Identity Organizations**

Many existing organizations that have interests in sexual freedom issues are organized on the basis of a particular sexual orientation or identity, rather than on the basis of specific issues. Their active political focus is defined by the nature of their identity groups – gay men, lesbians, leather people, BDSM, swingers, polyamory, transgendered, sex workers, etc. A role directed toward increasing understanding and acceptance of their lifestyles and opposing discrimination aimed specifically at these particular lifestyles certainly exists for such identity politics in American society.

However, such identity-based groups are limited in their ability to act alone on the type of issue activism that this manual discusses because such a group's appeal is to a specific, limited constituency. These specific constituencies are often controversial in ways that pose difficulties in creating the broad-based support that is necessary for success in direct action issue advocacy.

As we will discuss in more detail later, the goal of direct action issue advocacy is to bring pressure on governmental and/or corporate decision-makers to convince those decision-makers that the public opposition to their policy or practice is strong enough and broad enough that their interest is best served by changing a particular policy or practice. An identity-based organization is likely to find that its constituency is too small in number to represent a sufficient concern for the decision-maker. It will accordingly seek support from a broader constituency,

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either by joining with allies (groups that also are concerned about the issue in question) or by defining carefully the issue so that it attracts broad public support.

However, attracting the public to this issue may be difficult. In the area of sexual freedom, organizations representing alternative sexual practices or lifestyles may provoke a negative initial reaction in the minds of the general public. This negative reaction may hamper the direct action campaign by causing the public to identify what they might otherwise see as an appealing issue with a lifestyle that they view as unfavorable.

All of these points suggest that a direct action campaign may best be conducted one of two ways:

1. by a broad coalition of organizations – which is difficult to assemble and even more difficult to coordinate, or
2. by a formal or informal ad hoc organization focusing exclusively on the specific issue that is the subject of the campaign.

Finally, in twenty-first century America, diversity is an essential element of any effective organization, particularly in advocacy for sexual freedom and other human rights. Organizers should consequently ask themselves, who is making the final recommendations at the end of the process? Is everyone white? Is everyone heterosexual? Is everyone male? Are any of them union workers? Do they live in the cities or in the suburbs? Do they have children? Are any young people involved?

Self-interest encourages people to become activists, but it also encourages people to put their own experiences and needs first. This self-interest perpetuates old problems and does little to change policies. When a narrowly identified group of sex-positive activists develops solutions based on their own self-interests, they risk falling into the same trap as socially conservative religious groups. Without diversity of opinion and views, the proposed solution may address only one aspect of the problem. Others will feel left out of the process, and the opposition can easily exploit these divisions.

### **Recruiting and Managing Volunteers—The Essence of Direct Action Issue Campaigns**

This aspect is the most important one for success in direct action issue campaigns. In the words of one of the most celebrated and successful organizers of recent times, Martin Luther King, the key to recruiting and gaining support is people's visions: "If you want to move people, it has to be toward a vision that's positive for them, that has important values, that gets them something they desire, and it has to be presented in a compelling way that they feel inspired to follow." But exactly how does one do that?

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Many organizers become overwhelmed early on by stuffing envelopes, designing flyers, and performing other administrative tasks that could easily be done by volunteers. Your time as an organizer needs to be focused on recruiting and helping the organization develop, especially early in your campaign. Establish as an early priority the recruitment and development of a volunteer staff. It is essential and easier than it seems. People are concerned about larger social issues and are likely to be already actively involved in some social issue. Your role is to make sure that a certain percentage of the people who are actively involved and volunteering on social issues are working on your issues.

The key to success in recruiting is to appeal to the self-interest of the individual or organization you are recruiting. Their self-interest is likely to be different than yours. Don't try to sell them on why you need their help; focus on how their participation will benefit their self-interest. Someone's self-interest may be as simple as enjoying social interaction with you or getting away from the kids for the night. If people have fun participating and they feel they are a part of the solution and victories, then they are likely to continue volunteering. Once some successes have been achieved, even if they are only minor victories, then increasingly people will want to become involved.

While the vast majority of volunteers who join you do it for good and valuable reasons that benefit your efforts, some people volunteer to make a name for themselves because they are continual agitators, or for other reasons that may not be in the interest of the group. For people in volunteer organizations to agree to accept a title and certain level of responsibility—and then not meet their commitments—is common. For these reasons, be careful to integrate people into your campaign slowly and give them titles only after they have earned your trust and you are comfortable with them.

### **What Motivates People to Volunteer?**

People volunteer for a variety of reasons. Senior citizens may volunteer because they can use their professional skills again for something they feel is socially valuable, and because they enjoy the social interaction. Students and other people may volunteer either out of idealism or for professional or educational reasons; they even apply for internships in specific areas to gain new skills or obtain educational credits. People often volunteer because participating is fun and exciting, and a much better alternative to sitting home alone and watching TV. Some people volunteer to gain power or because they enjoy the limelight and doing things like speaking in public. Whatever the person's self-interest, they need to have consistent vision and values for them to be a long-term, successful part of your effort.

### **How Do I Start Recruiting Volunteers?**

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Early in the campaign effort, hold an initial outreach activity, such as having a booth at an event or announcing it at another ally's regular meeting, to gather volunteers and supporters. Let people know about the organization and your volunteer opportunities via e-mails, flyers, and advertisements in local publications.

As you become more active, every aspect of your campaign should contain an outreach effort for volunteers and supporters. Events, such as letter writing campaigns or seminars, are good opportunities for people to volunteer their time and money. Make it easy for people to support you in the way best suited to them – some would rather write a check, while others cannot afford to do that or want instead to participate by volunteering their time. Some will do both.

Schedule activities in which people can participate and feel immediately useful about helping rather than only attending a general meeting. Such an activity should be something easy for new volunteers to do to make them feel they are helping at once, such as copying literature, distributing flyers, etc. Make sure that those participating in such activities have fun and that they feel empowered by being part of the campaign. You may want to have snacks or a special theme for discussion while everyone works. Be sure to get contact information for all attendees.

Remember that newcomers are unfamiliar with your issues and your jargon. Always do a brief overview of the purpose of the organization or campaign and issue to give volunteers a perspective of their role in the big picture. Be careful not to talk in code or acronyms that newcomers will not understand. Tell them at the beginning that they should feel comfortable asking questions if something comes up that they don't understand or with which they may disagree. Make them feel comfortable that no question is a stupid question except the one that no one bothers to ask.

Say thank you to everyone who helps, even if it is a small effort, such as writing a letter to an official. Always give particular thanks and recognition to the efforts of those who do the most and hardest work. You cannot say thank you too much or in too many ways to the core group of volunteers who do the most work. Don't just send the usual "Thank you follow-up" form letter via e-mail. Consider sending a handwritten thank you card for special efforts or giving special benefits to those who are your best workers, such as a pass to attend political dinners. Personal phone calls are great ways to convey your thanks, and make lasting impressions on volunteers. Take your staff out for dinner, or have a pool party to recognize and celebrate their efforts. Highlighting key performers and leaders in press releases, in public, or with your board or supporters are also great ways to make volunteers feel special.

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Prior to your initial volunteer activities and recruitment meetings, prepare the positions and opportunities you want to present, and how you will present the organization and these opportunities. Present this information to volunteers as the start of what will be a long-term campaign rather than a one-time volunteer project.

Listen carefully to what people say and establish a rapport with them. Remember that organizing is about personal relationships. Make sure you understand their self-interests and any concerns they might have. You should be polite, express interest in them, and ask questions that draw out their interests. Get an understanding of the person's background, why they are interested in your effort, and of any special skills they might have that would benefit your group. Try to gauge their understanding of your issue and the local community by asking questions about related campaigns and local politics. In addition, try to determine if the person might be particularly useful from a networking or fundraising standpoint because of their involvement in another organization or their stature in the community or professional field.

Establish credibility. Is there anything you share with this person, such as being a parent or serving in the military, that you can use to establish common ground? Explain that you have the same problem in common – your issue. If you obtained their name as a reference from someone, inform them of the reference's complimentary recommendation. If they are prominent business or community leaders, then mention how pleased you are that someone of their stature is involved, and tell them how important their participation is to the success of the campaign.

It is very important that volunteers see that their leaders have a strong, emotional commitment to the issue. Make people indignant enough to act. Talk about your issue in ways that will invoke outrage at the injustice. Keep it short and passionate.

Do not let volunteers leave an initial recruitment session without a commitment to do more. Get them to commit, even if it is just to show up at another volunteer work night.

Make volunteers feel important and follow-up with them. Thank them and keep them advised of future activities in advance. Introduce them to others at the meeting and spend time at the meeting on making the volunteers feel special rather than chatting with other leaders and old friends. Don't lose touch with volunteers – have some routine communication even if it is only quarterly and very brief.

## **Suggestions on How to Keep Volunteers for the Long-Term**

Make sure volunteers understand the overall mission and goals of your cause, and how their participation will advance it. At each step of their participation, make the volunteers feel both that the campaign is making progress and that their contributions are an important reason for that progress.

Schedule a routine time and place for people to show up and work. This schedule will enable them to plan to participate regularly. If you do not have meeting space, then check local community buildings, such as libraries and other community organizations to see if they have a free meeting space available for your organization. You may also have a supporter who would allow you to use their office space or home.

Don't waste people's time. If you ask people to show up to help, then make sure you have things for everyone to do regardless of their skills. One of the most frustrating experiences for volunteers is to want to help, and to either get no response or not be given an action to perform. Finally, make each volunteer understand that hard and productive work by him or her will lead to more interesting and exciting assignments as the campaign progresses.

### **Leadership**

How do you get people to be in command of the issue and campaign, and to participate and commit long-term? Answering these key questions will help you to develop successful leadership.

First, how do you tell who has leadership potential? The best way to identify leaders is by their followers. Can this person bring people, such as members of a PTSA or a group of friends or neighbors, into your effort or to events? People with leadership potential have followers. Those individuals who are in concert with their followers' views and are able to motivate them to action are leaders. People who show up but cannot rouse others to participate may be good volunteers, but they are not leaders.

Give people recognition and let them share the spotlight; leaving them the entire spotlight and stepping out of it is even better once you have gained sufficient confidence in them. Include them in public appearances and press releases, and highlight their efforts publicly and within the campaign whenever possible.

Although you may feel your work is better than anyone else's, allow other leaders to step in and to do the work their own way even if they make some mistakes.

Don't rush into a leadership and campaign structure too early. Spend your early energy on solving the problem and taking action. You can wait six months to let the organizational and leadership issues develop naturally. Supporters will want

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to see some action to become involved or to continue support. If you spend all of your energy on the structure of the effort, then you will not be working in important ways that demonstrate to supporters and decision-makers the worth of the cause and the personal satisfaction to be desired from becoming a leader in the campaign.

Be inclusive and diverse in your leadership from the start. A diverse leadership will help to instill a diverse culture within the campaign and will open it to many more potential supporters from many constituencies.

Some leaders are better than others at motivating people to action through their passion. On the other hand, other leaders may be best suited to manage projects. Including leaders who focus on the big picture as well as those who are better at managing work and projects is important. Make sure that you have at least one or two strong, credible, and passionate leaders.

Evaluate the different qualities and skills in your various leadership candidates. Qualities will not change, but skills can be learned. Decide who becomes a leader based on the qualities a person possesses, and be willing to teach the skills you need. The qualities you should seek are:

- A commitment to your long-term vision and to the specific duties of the leadership position.
- Honesty, coupled with good diplomacy skills and tact.
- A positive attitude. Choose someone who sees the glass as half full rather than half empty. They will tend to focus on solutions rather than problems.
- A liking of, and trust in, people.
- Self-confidence. Self-confidence in oneself also instills self-confidence in others. This quality is important both for leaders and for staff-development purposes, and in situations where you are in adversarial meetings.

The key skills your leaders will need are: diplomacy, listening, ability to set goals, ability to recruit, and personal organization.

### **How to Develop Leaders**

First determine the leaders' self-interest, and consider the benefits that they may acquire from participating in your group. Becoming a leader is an exciting way for someone to obtain recognition and respect. It is an opportunity to play an important role in the history of the sexual freedom movement. It may also be an opportunity for them to learn new skills, and even start a new career. Once you understand their self-interests, focus on the benefits your campaign offers that satisfy them.

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Create opportunities for leaders to develop. Start with a small task and allow someone to volunteer to manage the process. This task may be as simple as setting up a booth or managing table duties at an event.

Regularly offer feedback. Both praise and constructive criticism will help them develop as leaders. Bear in mind that you need to be particularly diplomatic in giving constructive criticism in volunteer organizations; you should always criticism with praise of someone's assets and good work. Group discussions among leaders about how to improve organizationally are also a good feedback mechanism, and makes leaders feel more involved.

Make sure leaders are having fun. Stay on top of people's attitudes to assess their emotional state. People need to enjoy what they are doing. If they aren't having fun, then you need to fix the problem ASAP.

Allow leaders to develop other leaders because it is an important part of developing as leaders themselves. You don't need to do everything yourself. Make sure that you establish this process for leaders to follow.

Rotate and cross-train roles. People get bored, and more than one person needs to be able to perform certain roles in emergencies for the campaign to have the depth it needs. Develop back-up staff for key positions and cross-train. Develop a "second lieutenant" position, and select a good potential leader to fill the role. This position allows leaders to develop slowly with good supervision. The goal is eventually to let this lieutenant take over the leadership role, with the current leader getting promoted to do "bigger and better" things.

Establish leadership development goals with the leadership group itself that are consistent with the overall goals of the campaign, and periodically review and update them.

Remember that you need both leaders and organizers, and understand the difference. While leaders and organizers may be the same person, they can also be different people. Make sure you include a couple of strong organizers in your group.

### **Planning and Holding Effective Meetings**

The purpose of your meetings should be to make decisions and take action. The key to a successful meeting is to be well prepared. If you are meeting openly and inviting supporters, then leaders should be involved in advance in presentations related to the organization, strategy, and goals. If you are meeting with leaders and/or volunteer staff, then you need less formal preparation though some is still needed. Don't just set a time, show up, and say, "What should we talk about tonight?"

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Start promptly and don't meet for more than two hours. Have a chair or facilitator for each meeting to keep it on track.

Don't get bogged down in details and lose sight of the big picture. People often tend to focus on details rather than the issue at hand, particularly if that issue is sensitive or controversial.

Have an agenda and the goals established in advance. Include suggested time limits for discussion of each area. Send out the agenda in advance of the meeting. Review the agenda at the start of the meeting to see if anyone has anything to add. If they do, then either add it or let them know when it will be addressed.

Choose a space that is safe and easy to get to, has wheelchair access, and is large enough. Check local libraries and other community buildings and organizations that offer meeting spaces free of charge or for a very low fee to community-based groups.

Have a note-taker and someone who is responsible for greeting people and obtaining contact information. Make sure that notes are sent out promptly to ensure that important points do not get lost and that action is taken ASAP.

Establish who is responsible for carrying out each decision made and the timeframe.

Choose presenters in advance and make sure they are prepared. A specific person should do a presentation or briefing on a certain area or subject.

Arrange the room to facilitate discussion. Arranging chairs in a circle will encourage more discussion. Have a flip chart or blackboard on which to write. Be sure to bring extra paper and pens for attendees who forget to bring them. Have a sign-in sheet.

Don't let one or two people dominate the discussion. Draw out people who may be shy by asking them their opinions, and provide everybody with a chance to speak once on a topic before allowing someone else to add a second opinion on the subject.

Assign someone to set up and clean up. Make sure that someone sets up the room and brings refreshments, and that someone is responsible for cleaning up afterward.

Introduce people, or let them introduce themselves and talk a little about why they are at the meeting.

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Set rules for the meeting and review them at the start. Some particularly important rules are: be respectful of the opinions of others, don't interrupt others when they are speaking, etc.

End the meeting on time.

Follow-up with phone calls to new people to set up one-on-one meetings and with the facilitator to evaluate the meeting and how it might be improved in the future. Thank everyone who attended and helped with the meeting via e-mail. If key people you were expecting did not attend, call them to give them updates and find out why they weren't there.

### **Workload Control and Administrative Issues**

Having good administrative systems will help you keep track of the details and manage your workload. This key component will help you avoid long-term burnout as an activist. Here are some suggestions.

#### **Tracking Tasks**

For each project, establish a timeline. Maintain both an organizational and personal calendar. Create a daily and weekly to-do list and review it at the start and end of each day.

Use automation to help. Many computer programs are available to track your calendars and tasks. Encourage the campaign to invest in automation that helps reduce the workload such as copy machines, computer tracking programs, etc.

#### **Tracking Paper**

Certain documents need to be kept for legal reasons, and you are likely to have files on allies, opponents, the media, marketing and other subjects. In-going and out-going correspondence files should be maintained chronologically. In addition to these files, you should establish a file for each project/issue/event, and a tickler file to remind you of key tasks. Some people keep daily tickler files, while others keep weekly, or monthly files. Keep files on important public officials and elections.

Establish common filing procedures and categories for a trained staff person, or you may have a volunteer do this work. Doing your own filing in small campaigns is better to ensure the information ends up in the right place and you can find it again.

## **Tracking People, Phone Calls and Meetings**

Maintain a directory of contact information for key personnel and establish files for each leader. Keep personal information, evaluations, letters of praise from supporters, birthdays, their resume, job description, and anything else that may be pertinent.

Track conversations and phone calls with people. If you are talking to an ally, the media or a supporter routinely, then you need to keep track of your conversations. Some people keep a daily log of phone conversations and meetings for future reference. Others keep call and meeting records categorized by individuals. Doing both is best, but choose at least one method that works for you. Send thank you notes as appropriate follow-up to people after phone calls or meetings.

## **Tracking Time**

Even if the organization does not require you to track your time, understanding how your time, as well as that of key personnel, is spent is important. Schedule your workload to perform tasks when they are best for you. Some people are creative writers early in the morning, and others are best suited to do remedial tasks in the early morning that do not require heavy thought. Understand your energy and schedule your time accordingly.

Don't let e-mail and telephones control your day. Schedule time to work on projects when you do not take calls or read e-mails. If you let them, then phone calls and e-mail can easily take over your day and leave you with no time to finish your other work.

Have short phone meetings instead of face-to-face meetings to save time. These meetings are only appropriate when you have already established a relationship or don't need to build one with the individual.

## **Keep Your Eye on the Ball—Focusing on the Long-Term Goal and Avoiding Burnout**

While social activism is very rewarding, it takes a long time and requires building leaders with lifelong commitments to sexual freedom advocacy. This commitment needs to be integrated and balanced with one's life to avoid burnout. Here are some suggestions on how to focus your energies and balance your activism with the rest of your life.

Establish measurable goals and review them at least annually. Set personal development and organizational development goals for yourself each year. Make sure they are achievable and measurable.

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Get the training and direction you need. If you need special skills or direction, then ask the organization to provide it to you. Get to know other organizers that can give you advice and suggestions on how they have handled similar situations.

Find a mentor. Pick a leader who can mentor your development. You may have several mentors or colleagues who provide you regular advice, support and feedback. This person may be someone within your organization, but s/he does not need to be. Getting feedback from those outside of your own organization is often helpful because they will have a different perspective.

Have a long-term vision. If you are going to stay in the organization for the long-term, then you need to know what you are working toward.

Balance your life. Make sure you spend time with friends and family, and take time for yourself to relax and take vacations from your work as an activist. Activists are often over-achievers, and have difficulty stepping away. It is essential for long-term success as an activist to achieve and maintain a good balance between activism and other aspects of your life.

Recognize the pressure on leaders and organizers, and prepare the organization to absorb growth adequately. Organizations that build momentum and grow quickly have increased workloads within short periods of time. The responsibility of making sure the work gets done ultimately falls to the leaders and organizers. Make sure you have structures and people in place to support the level of growth you expect.

Ask for help when you need it and take care of yourself. When you get overwhelmed, don't be afraid to ask for help. Other leaders or staff may be able to help out on some of your projects. Be sure to take care of yourself physically and mentally. If you feel you need a break from work, then insist on taking one and ask the campaign to help fill the void for a short period.

### **How to Be a Great Speaker in Public**

Public speaking frequently frightens those without much experience; it is perceived to be difficult. The reality is that speaking to strangers is easier than to friends, and speaking to large audiences is easier than to a group of three or four. Those listening to your speech expect less from you than if you were talking to them one-on-one or in a small group. Most people listening to the speech are also likely to have a fear of public speaking themselves, and may automatically relate if the speaker is nervous or makes a mistake.

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A speech is intended to move people to action. What do you want people to do as a result of the speech? It may be something as simple as writing a letter or a check. Be sure you have at least three ways for people to act as a result of each speech, one of which should always be asking for money.

### Create a mood

The content of your speech is not the only critical component; setting a mood is also essential. You may include an opening theme song in the background, a visual display, or a passionate and unique opening phrase or quotation that is memorable.

### Prepare adequately

Research the audience and gear your speech toward them. Geographic, ethnic, and age differences need to be considered in your language and tone. Special language skills may be needed in specific circumstances.

Understand the context within which you will be speaking. What is the overall program and how much time will you have?

### Research the topic

Write the speech. Each speech should have a beginning, middle and end. List the points you will make during each section. Then, write the full-blown text of what you plan to say. Convert this text into a bulleted outline for use during the speech (unless you plan to read the speech, which is not the best approach). Do not try to write down three points and make your speech from them. You risk failing to connect the points and being forced to add detail later in the speech, which may seem haphazard. Writing is different than speaking, and you must recognize that your listeners require information to be presented in a structured manner so they can follow along. The introduction should accordingly offer a summary of the speech: your claim(s), the points you will raise in support, etc. The middle should provide details as you explore the points you've mentioned in the introduction, perhaps focusing on the person(s) responsible for the problem you are addressing. The end should build the case for the action you want people to take and tell them what to do (some people find it helpful to write the closing first, then to go back and write the rest from the start – write in the way that seems most comfortable for you). Close by summarizing what people need to do and get them excited about acting. For example, you might say, “We have achieved great success in the past, and I know that if each of you do your part in this project, then we will win.” Use humor if you are comfortable with it because letting yourself and your personality into the speech is appropriate. But don't try to be someone else.

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Practice the speech. Make sure you rehearse enough and do it in front of others. Time yourself. Use a tape recorder and listen to the speech.

### Giving the speech

After first practicing with the written speech using a tape recorder, try to move to the bulleted outline to see if you can reproduce the majority of the speech without following the word-for-word text. If you can't, then plan to read the speech while providing as much eye contact as appropriate. Reading the speech is better than stumbling while using an outline. Don't be discouraged if you are not able to do this on your first attempt.

Arrive early and make sure there is adequate lighting and that you know where you will be speaking. Reading in dark halls or on dimly lit stages is difficult. Be sure your notes are large enough and clear.

Involve the audience. They are part of the speech, just as you are. Involve them by invoking humor or a response, such as "What do we want to tell the governor?" (Audience shouts response), then "Now let's say it loud enough for him to hear us!" (Audience shouts louder response).

Have someone introduce you. This introduction is very important and establishes your credibility as a speaker. Don't introduce yourself – let someone else do it.

Dress a little more formally than the attendees. Don't wear clothing that will distract from what you have to say.

Calm your nerves. Even for experienced speakers, feeling nervous before speaking is normal. Knowing where you will speak in advance and standing at the podium or in position will gradually make you feel more comfortable with the setting. If you feel you may be too nervous, talk to someone about another subject until right before you speak. Take a minute or two immediately before you speak to meditate and calm yourself in a quiet place away from activity. Do deep breathing exercises and some cleansing breaths. These exercises will not only help your nerves, but also help to reduce voice cracking that may occur when people are very nervous. If you cannot find a quiet place, use a restroom.

Listen to the speakers before you to see how the microphone responds, which will help you judge the distance you should be from the microphone.

Speak standing up – never speak sitting down. Lungs do not function the same way when you sit.

Never apologize. Don't apologize for being nervous or making a mistake.

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Be prepared for stage fright. Stage fright can strike even experienced speakers at very awkward times. If your notes get blurry, your memory is a blank and you freeze, then you are experiencing stage fright. Take a drink of water and wipe your forehead if needed. Take a few deep breaths as you refocus your thoughts. Don't be afraid of a brief silence – it sounds worse to you than the audience.

If you lose the audience, find a way to bring them back. Sometimes speeches are too long or complicated and the audience loses track. If this happens, try to bring the audience back by speaking softly so they have to listen harder, or by introducing humor or an audience participation gimmick. If these steps do not work, then skip to the end of the speech—the heart of the matter—and leave the rest out. People are likely not to notice.

Regardless of how well the speech actually goes, you may be unhappy with your performance and be self-critical. Public speaking, like anything else, is a skill that needs to be practiced. You will improve and learn something each time you do it. Review your speech with your peers after the occasion to see how it may be improved in the future.

### **Grabbing the Headlines—Using the Media to Advance Your Cause**

The media are an important component of successful issue campaigns. They should be part of your campaign, and spokespeople should be trained and become experienced in working with the media. How do the media work and how do you use them?

To begin with, you must understand that the media are both a business and a form of entertainment. All businesses want to make money, and more money. They also have advertisers and corporate sponsors. Although the media generally try to include differing views, they are not neutral entities reporting the “truth.” They have their own biases and self-interests.

Make sure you understand the audience of the media outlet, and tailor your message to appeal to it. If your message increases readership or viewers, they will like it. Because sex is a topic that sells, publicity for sexual freedom issues and campaigns may, in fact, be easier to get than for other topics. However, you should be cautious about to whom you give interviews and with whom you work in the media because sex is typically sensationalized. Often, starting with the alternative or GLBT news publication for your area is easiest. Small newspapers and local publications are always looking for stories. If you make it easy for them and do their legwork, then you will likely get publicity about your efforts. Furthermore, once your issue begins to get coverage somewhere – even in small or local publications or stations, you have taken a major first step toward broader notice by more important media.

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If you are deciding whether to seek an appearance on, or if you are asked to appear on, a local talk show, then watch the show in advance to see if it is overly sensationalistic and to assess its political/social point of view. If it is too sensationalistic or has a strongly opposing viewpoint, then it is not the best outlet for issues of sexual freedom. Be aware also of the dynamics of the program. Does the host let the guest get her/his message across? Or is this a host intent solely on showing how “brilliant” he or she is? Make sure you understand the purpose of the interview and do a pre-interview. For example, if you decide to proceed after reading a print publication, listening to a radio show or watching a TV show, then do a pre-interview before doing the actual interview. Find out the specific content of the show and information about the other guests. Are you being asked to discuss your issue, or do they plan to parade you as a “freak” for working on controversial issues related to sex? Will you be facing religious political extremist opposition during the show? If so, then there is probably more risk than opportunity.

### **General Suggestions for Dealing with the Media**

If you are contacted by the media with a short time frame and do not know anything about the outlet or reporter, do some basic Internet research. Then contact your regional GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) office and ask them about the outlet. GLAAD is a good resource to ask about local media friends and foes. They are open to helping sexual freedom activists on media issues. In addition to the reporters with whom they routinely work, they have access to specific publications that provide detailed information about outlets and reporters.

Don't overuse the media, and don't use the media if it will damage your campaign. Focus on using the media at the points in your campaign that will be most effective. Where sexual freedom issues are concerned, avoiding media coverage and working behind the scenes with officials is sometimes better, especially during the early stages of negotiating with public officials or corporations.

Be sure to develop good talking points, know how to write press releases and advisories, and learn to conduct press interviews. Start with print publications because their interviews are not “live” and are easier. Then progress to radio, then TV. Don't forget the importance of letters to the editor – they are easy and effective.

Get the experience and training you need. Numerous resources are available to tell you how to work with the media, frame issues, develop talking points, write press releases, conduct interviews, hold events and press conferences, and to learn other important information. Training programs and advice can be provided

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by some of these resources. Refer to the Resource Guide at the end of this manual under the “Media” section.

Remember that you do not have to grant a requested interview. If you are not comfortable with the publication, focus of the story or the reporter, then you may consider declining the interview. Not all publicity is good publicity.

Be proactive – control the media rather than letting them control you. If you proactively plan media events, write op-ed pieces and pitch stories to the media, then your message will be closest to the one you want. This situation is particularly true when the interview you are requested to give is one in which you will be asked to comment on some event that the interviewer will portray as a shocking sexual outrage. Even a well-done response to a negative story about sexuality sets a much different tone and is less positive than an affirmative interview, such as announcing a major campaign to eliminate antiquated sex laws. To avoid being called on only to react to sensationalized negative events, you should develop a relationship with the media and sell a positive story on your issue and group. Once you have a working relationship, you will have more control over media coverage in the future, even in those instances where you are asked for a reactive response to a negative incident.

Practice makes perfect. Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse. Have one or two people who role-play to help spokespeople prepare for interviews, particularly for ones that might be hostile or aggressive. Tape these practice interviews and evaluate the performance.

Think of the difficult or controversial questions that may arise, and prepare a response. Suggestions on what to say about sex are included in the following section and Appendix B, “What to Say About Sex”.

Develop a media database of key publications and contacts within those publications within each key category, such as the local TV stations, newspaper metro section, etc. Keep track of conversations with reporters. Thank them for publishing a story. Keep them updated and send them future story-pitches that may interest them.

Establish and train spokespeople. Pick leaders who are actively involved as your spokespeople. Have a primary and secondary spokesperson. You may have people who specialize on certain issues (i.e. experts). Many people like to be in the limelight and this is a good way to reward strong leaders. Have each spokesperson practice general talking points on your issue, and prepare specific ones for each event or interview based on the circumstances. Always perform a rehearsal in advance if your spokesperson has not done a similar interview before. If it is a major media opportunity, then rehearse even if they know the talking points in their sleep.

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## **What to Say About Sex**

Sex will often be introduced in some negative or inflammatory fashion based on what the opposition has told the media or upon some recent unfortunate event, so be prepared for the worst. If you know your talking points and use your sense of humor, then you can turn such dialogue to your advantage. The opposition and reporters are usually much less comfortable talking about sex than sexual freedom activists. You should never discuss the details of your own sexuality, but be willing and even aggressive about discussing sex in scientific and health terms. This discussion increases your credibility, making you—not the hostile interviewer—appear to be the reasonable one. Frame your issues of sexual freedom related to freedom of expression and basic human rights. This point establishes you as the principled discussant, as opposed to others who trivialize or sensationalize the subject.

For specific responses, see Appendix B, “What to Say About Sex” on page 67. This document was developed with input from Executive Directors of national GLBT and HIV/AIDS groups as part of a presentation on “Sex and Politics” held at the National Policy Roundtable of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in March 2001. It presents effective ways to discuss sex as it relates to political advocacy, and shows how to deal with specific controversial issues or myths perpetuated by religious political extremists that often arise during media interviews.

## **The Color of Money—How and Where to Raise Funds**

This area is one of the most important ones on which to focus, and frequently one of the hardest for inexperienced organizers and leaders. Many people are uncomfortable with the thought of asking a person for money, and are not familiar with effective ways to raise funds. Most grassroots efforts will obtain their funding from grassroots fundraising efforts coupled with donations from large, private donors. Grassroots fundraising empowers people and is frequently unrestricted for activities such as lobbying. Foundation and government grants, direct-mail fundraising campaigns, and other financial sources are also available. However, these sources are often impractical for newly organized groups and are consequently not addressed in this handbook.

For purposes of the present manual, we will explore three important areas related to fundraising:

- Why people donate and the key elements of fundraising
- The basics of grassroots fundraising
- Ideas for grassroots fundraising related to sexual freedom issues

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## **Why People Donate and Key Elements of Fundraising**

People give money to people, not just for causes. If they like you, respect you and admire your commitment to and passion for your cause, then they are more likely to donate when you ask them for money. This motive is often as, or more, important to a donor than supporting your issue. If you do not have a relationship with an individual donor before you ask for a really significant amount of money, then wait until you build one.

Fund-raising events are important. The first rule to remember is that people attend events that are fun. In many cases, especially in the case of new organizations, donors may go to your fundraiser not because they support your organization, but because of the event itself or because you asked them to attend. If you establish a reputation for holding fun and exciting fundraising events that are the talk of the town or your community, then people will attend. In the early stages of your campaign, having fun-filled fundraising activities is essential to get good attendance and donations. Sexual freedom activists have unique opportunities to hold events with themes and activities that involve one of everyone's favorite subjects – SEX. But whether or not your fundraiser has a sex-based theme, make it fun and memorable for attendees. If you do, then they will come back, and they will be likely to donate.

People can donate goods and services as well as money. For people to donate their attorney services pro bono or print your materials for free is often easier than writing a check. In-kind contributions of goods and services are good ways to improve your bottom line. You should be able to fund 10-30% of your efforts through in-kind contributions.

## **The Basics of Grassroots Fundraising**

Raise as much money as possible from supporters through grassroots efforts. Remember that the majority of charitable donations are made by individuals in middle- to low-income brackets.

Establish a goal. The strategy outline you develop should include a budget for the campaign. Make sure to include all foreseeable expenses, plus overhead that you incur in fundraising. Develop a conservative fundraising plan that exceeds your budget by 20%.

Fundraising is a continuous process. Develop an annual calendar for fundraising activities. While not every detail will be filled in at the start, a schedule provides a working document that will help you plan your fundraising efforts to correspond to your budget needs. If you do not have specific events planned for later in the year, then include a type of event, such as "political house party," and a cost amount. Include enough activities to meet your budget.

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Don't think small. People often invest a lot of time and effort in small fundraising activities that do not raise much money, such as small tea parties. While these small events have their place, other types of fundraisers may raise more money with less effort. A large ball, a benefit concert or art exhibition – these attract substantial numbers of people and can raise significant dollar amounts.

Analyze the fundraising opportunity in the context of your campaign. Although a similar campaign held a certain type of fundraiser that was successful, it may not work for you. Look at the reasons why their event worked effectively to analyze whether it might work for you.

Build on past events and have fun. Make sure each event is memorable. If you have a successful event, then plan to repeat it, perhaps in six months.

Raise money for issues. People are more likely to donate if you focus on the important issues the money can help solve rather than talking about your overhead expenses.

Avoid large, up-front expenditures for untested kinds of events. If you do not have experience for holding a specific type of fundraiser, then you should not experiment when a significant initial investment is needed. Wait until you hold a similar event with success, even if it is a smaller and less visible fundraising project.

Be sure that small product sales make sense. While you may be able to generate money selling pins and tee shirts, it is not always worth the investment in time and inventory. Products are frequently sold in conjunction with campaign efforts as a way to raise visibility, but product sales do not usually generate substantive income. Remember, however, that pins, tee shirts, etc. may have another benefit if cleverly done – that is, gaining attention for your campaign and cause in a very visible way.

Be honest and ethical. Make sure you keep track of where monies came from and went. Be able to produce financial statements. Campaigns that cannot in a timely fashion tell people where money came from and how it was spent lose support quickly. Not paying attention to this detail can come back to haunt you quickly and without much warning. You do not want to be the “Enron” of sexual freedom activities.

Thank everyone and continue to build relationships with them. Once someone has contributed, they are more likely to give again. You cannot thank donors too many times or in too many ways. Write personal thank you notes, and call anyone who donates \$50 or more. Build a relationship and stay in touch, particularly with larger contributors. Send donors articles you come across that

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might be of interest to them or find other ways to stay in touch. Recognize major donors and thank them publicly (unless they wish to remain anonymous).

Do not ignore your campaign participants as donors. Establish a culture of giving within the organization. Establish an expectation from the start that supporters will give money to the effort.

### **Ideas for Grassroots Fundraising**

The following are ideas that have worked well in fundraising for sexual freedom advocacy.

#### A political house party

These parties are common ways to raise funds for social advocacy organizations. The best way to become familiar with how they are held is to attend a political house party for another organization.

You will need someone with a suitable large home willing to host the event. Establish a “host committee” that will help you gather attendees and will help you establish credibility. Having a diverse host committee that represents various constituencies that you want to target is helpful and having prominent individuals attend is desirable. Develop an invitation and consider including a suggested minimum donation. Ask people to RSVP.

Provide food and beverages. They do not need to be expensive.

Have passionate speakers that present your issues in ways that make people want to act. Develop short, effective remarks and rehearse them. Make sure the audience is familiar with your successes and track record. Then, tell your people what your financial goal is for the evening and ask for money.

Have a pre-arranged donor or two who will start the process and state that they are donating a certain amount, or giving an amount based on someone else matching it. Ask for money more than once, in different ways. Be sure they understand all of the ways they can donate.

Invite four to seven times the number of people you want to attend. You don't want an under-attended event. In estimating your turnout, remember that the better the attendees know the host committee or person who invited them, the more likely they will attend and donate.

### A food tasting

A local restaurant may help you sponsor this type of event, or you can hold it on your own. Select a certain type of food, such as desserts and wine, that will be featured. Send an invitation with a suggested minimum amount and an RSVP. Prepare speakers and speeches in the same manner as you would for the political house party.

### A concert or performance

Have a singer, comedian, or other entertainer/group of entertainers put together a performance for the benefit of your organization.

### A dinner

Dinners are a frequently used to raise money for advocacy groups. Many groups hold an annual dinner as their large fundraising event each year. You may be able to get sponsorship from local businesses, particularly if you are honoring a prominent person. Prices for tickets need to be substantially more than the cost of the food to make this event worthwhile. Most groups sell tables to allies or ask well-known people to host tables. In the latter case, your group may have to guarantee to the table host that you will fill any seats that she or he is unable to fill.

Have other ways to generate income during this event, such as a silent auction, a raffle (first check local laws) or some form of contest.

Start out small. These types of dinners grow in size over time. For the first one, be conservative in your estimates and pick a space that will not look too large if attendance is less than expected. You never want the room to look empty at a fundraiser.

### BDSM/Leather, swing, or polyamory events

Hold an event with fun-filled themes about sex for one of the communities that practice alternative sexual expression. BDSM/Leather enthusiasts frequently attend auctions of toys, erotic art, and even people for specific and consensual BDSM scenes. Having a party is always popular and easy for anyone to do. Hold a carnival night with activities such as kissing or spanking booths. If you pick a special theme or ask prominent guests to attend, then attendance will increase and the event will be more memorable.

## Getting People to Show Up at Events

People are more likely to show up if your effort is visible and attracts attention. In most community efforts, telephone work is needed to get enough people to attend. Make lists of people who have expressed interest or with whom you have had contact. You should ideally get a small group of people together for a couple of hours in an office to make the telephone calls. This gathering enables you to coach and help them, and is also more fun for them. You will likely get one person to attend your events for every seven to ten calls.

Communicate the message to people in as many ways as possible – emails, posters around town, reminders at other community meetings, etc. No matter how many ways you contact people, a personal phone call is still essential to getting maximum turnout.

Have people wear nametags at the event and have callers introduce themselves to those attendees with whom they spoke.

If you have something unusual, fun and exciting at your events, perhaps with media coverage, then people will attend again. Try to have something different at each event to make it memorable for the attendees.

Here is what you need to include in your phone call script to recruit attendees:

- Identify the past connection of the individual to the campaign. Did they attend a previous meeting, sign a petition, write a letter?
- Talk about the most recent success of your campaign.
- Tell them that numbers of people matter with officials, and that you need them.
- Tell them they will have a role even if they will not be speaking. Just showing up demonstrates support for the issue, which lets the official know the issue is important to them.
- Get a commitment. Make a reminder call. Only half of the people who say they will attend will actually show up.



## Conclusion

The Woodhull Freedom Foundation is devoted to education and public advocacy in support of the proposition that safe and consensual sexual expression is a fundamental human right. We seek to eliminate the barriers—governmental and private—to expressions of human sexuality in the US and around the world. By using the techniques discussed in this manual, we will eliminate the world's barriers to true sexual freedom.

Sexual freedom means that we have to organize effectively at the grassroots. People lose custody of their children, lose their jobs, and face unbelievably harsh criminal punishment because of their sexuality. In the current political climate, we can expect more attacks from the extremists as our political power and visibility increase.

Around America, and in many parts of the world, communities are organizing for sexual freedom, and promise much needed change. The most effective of these campaigns are proactive: local people lobbying to change the laws before a friend is arrested, a father loses custody of his child, a woman loses her job. But more people in more communities must take up new campaigns to build the movement for sexual freedom.

The Woodhull Freedom Foundation knows that ordinary people can learn the skills to be successful organizers. Ordinary people, volunteering just an hour or two a week, can build significant alliances and public support on sex issues. Small and simple initiatives do make a difference.

This manual provides a number of important and effective avenues to promote sexual freedom politically and to organize local groups. Whether you are interested in helping the cause of sexual freedom in small ways or prefer more extensive action, the Woodhull Freedom Foundation has resources to help you organize more effectively.

## Appendix A Activist Resource Guide

### General:

<http://www.citizenworks.org/pcd/v1/index.php/>

*The Progressive Community Directory* (a part of Citizen Works)

(202) 265-6164

Allows groups to create their own community activist directory. Provides suggestions on how to become active, connect with allies, and raise awareness. Directory template available at <http://www.citizenworks.org/pcd/v1/pcd.php/>

<http://mygov.governmentguide.com/mygov/index.html/>

Identifies contacts for federal, state, and local officials.

<http://www.lwv.org/>

*League of Women Voters*

(202) 429-1965

Dedicated to raising voter awareness and increasing voter turnout. Focuses on major public policy issues, including election reform.

<http://www.noacentral.org/>

*National Organizers Alliance (NOA)*

(202) 543-6603

A collective activist home for people working on progressive social issues. Organizes national gatherings, sponsors events and caucuses, promotes social justice dialogues, produces a quarterly newsletter (The ARK), hosts a web-based organizer clearinghouse, and provides a portable retirement pension plan.

<http://www.hotsalsa.org/>

*Social Action and Leadership School for Activists (SALSA)*

(202) 234-9382 x229

Offers a skills-training program, classes, and workshops for progressive organizations and individuals that strengthen community activism and foster engaged citizenship. Provides a forum for discussion and development of progressive issues and agendas, a unique networking opportunity for local activists, and help on non-profit management issues.

### Media:

<http://www.indymedia.org/>

*IndyMedia*

A not-for-profit collection of media groups and activists. Strives to increase community access to information and technology. Groups may publish to raise awareness either through a local IMC or the main site.

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<http://www.glaad.org/>

*Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, National Capital Area (GLAAD/NCA)*

(202) 986-0425

Promotes fair, accurate, inclusive and diverse representation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the media as a means of combating homophobia and all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

<http://www.wifp.org>

*Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press*

(202) 265-6707

Non-profit, tax-exempt research, education and publishing organization founded in 1972. Publications include the *Directory of Women's Media* and a booklet series on media democracy issues.

<http://www.kidon.com/media-link/index.shtml>

*Kidon Media-Link*

An international, independent internet site that provides a directory of news sources, particularly newspapers.

<http://www.fair.org/activism/activismkit.html>

*Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting*

A media activism kit that discusses how to detect media bias and how to meet with journalists, and lists media contacts.

### **Sexual Rights:**

<http://www.llego.org/>

*National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO)*

(202) 408-5380

National organization including 172 Network of Allies organizations (Afiliados and Aliados). Addresses lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Latinas/os issues at local, state, regional, national and international levels.

<http://www.qrd.org/qrd/>

*Queer Resources Directory*

Links to queer media sources, queer events, queer politics and activism, and many other topics of interest.

<http://www.PFLAG.org/>

*Parents Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays*

(202) 467-8180

Non-profit, volunteer-run organization that provides support, education, and advocacy programs for members and the general public for families who have a

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gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered member, and for those individuals themselves.

<http://www.bayswan.org/>

*Bay Area Sex Worker Advocacy Network (BAYSWAN)*

415-751-1659

Collaborative project providing information for sex workers and about the sex industries. Links sex workers and others to resources provided by sex workers' organizations. Organizes to improve working conditions, increase safety and services for workers, and to eliminate discrimination on behalf of individuals working within the sex industry.

<http://www.leatherleadership.org/>

*The Leather Leadership Conference*

Annual conference focusing on strengthening the SM/Leather/Fetish community. Encourages the development of leadership skills within local community groups, and creating ties among communities worldwide.

<http://www.dcsma.org/>

*District of Columbia Sexual Minority Advocates*

Non-profit organization established to provide a safe environment for advocacy, education, and empowerment for the SM/leather/fetish community in Washington, DC. Maintains a *Handbook for Operating a Volunteer SM Group*, which includes how to organize events, how to establish and reach out to potential contributors or members, and how to approach the corporate aspect of the organization.

<http://www.ncsfreedom.org/>

### **The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom**

410-539-4824

Focuses on ending discrimination based on sexual self-expression; ending the censorship of images and descriptions of sexual expression among consenting adults; passing hate-crime laws and any statues that limit private sexual expression among consenting adults; and educating the public to promote understanding of sexual minorities and sexual minority practices.

<http://www.sfc.org.uk/>

### **Sexual Freedom Coalition**

London-based organization that promotes sexual freedom both legally and socially.

### **Sexual and Gender Rights:**

<http://www.gpac.org/>

*Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC)*

202.462.6610

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Combats gender stereotypes that result in discrimination and violence by educating the public, engaging elected officials to review their gender misconceptions, and expanding legal rights. Also has a youth campaign, GenderYOUTH.

<http://www.glad.org/>

### **Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders**

617.426.1350

A legal rights organization that offers litigation, advocacy, and education for GLBT civil rights and the rights of people with HIV.

<http://www.tri.org/>

### **Triangle Foundation**

313-537-3323

Michigan-based organization that serves the GLBT and allied communities by offering various services, such as support for victims of hate-crimes and discrimination, policy and legislative development, GLBT family support, education support services for GLBT students.

### **Youth:**

<http://www.smyal.org/>

### **Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League**

202.546.5940

Non-profit working for, and with, GLBTQ youth. Maintains a safe space for youth to gather in Washington, D.C. and encourages the development of such spaces in other communities. Works to increase public awareness and understanding of sexual minority youth issues as well as encourage youth activism.

<http://www.nyacyouth.org/>

### **National Youth Advocacy Coalition**

202.319.7596

Provides awareness about current legislation that affects GLBTQ youth and the community overall. Encourages youth action and political awareness.

<http://www.glsen.org/>

### **Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network**

(212) 727-0135

Fights to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools. Educates students, teachers, and the public about the damaging effects of homophobia and heterosexism in the school environment. Provides support and resources to students so they feel empowered to take their own steps to change their schools into more accepting institutions.

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<http://www.youthlink.org/us/>

### **Youth In Action**

212-661-6111

Promotes the voices of youths and issues important to them through artistic forums, various programs, national conferences, scholarships, and youth-initiated community activities.

<http://www.takingitglobal.org/>

*Taking It Global (TIG)*

(416) 977-9363

An international youth organization aimed at addressing global problems through networking and discussions, workshops, projects, and education.

<http://www.syrf.org/>

### **Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom**

202-628-7700

Pro-choice, pro-faith, multicultural, and interfaith youth and young adult program of the Religious Coalition of Reproductive Choice organization. Has a student anti-hate organizing kit for campuses <http://www.syrf.org/syrf/organizingkit.htm>.

<http://www.youthmediacouncil.org/>

### **Youth Media Council**

510-444-0640 x312

Youth group that develops youth activist leadership, increases the media capacity of various youth campaigns, and organizes watchdog projects to increase the public voices of marginalized youth.

### **Legal:**

<http://www.lambdalegal.org>

### **Lamda Legal**

212-809-8585

A national organization promoting civil rights for individuals and groups in the GLBT community and people with HIV or AIDS. Has offices in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, and Dallas, and maintains a network of volunteer corporate attorneys.

<http://www.nglft.org/>

*National Gay and Lesbian Task Force*

(202) 332-6483

Works to eliminate prejudice, violence and injustice against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people at the local, state and national levels since its inception in 1973.

<http://www.nclrights.org/>

*National Center for Lesbian Rights*

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415.392.6257

Legal resource center that mainly advocates the rights of lesbians and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, free legal advice and counseling, and public education. Also helps gay men, and bisexual and transgender individuals on issues related to lesbian rights.

<http://www.aclu.org/>

*American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*

(212) 549-2585

Works in the community, legislative, and judicial levels to combat violations of individual rights and civil liberties.

<http://www.nowdef.org/>

*NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund*

(212) 925-6635

Addresses women's rights and promotes gender equity for women and girls through legal and educational channels and programs

<http://www.lawcollective.org/>

*The Just Cause Law Collective*

510-835-5878

Provides legal support for activists of nonviolent political resistance throughout their campaigns by holding workshops on demonstration tactics, legal assistance, and representation in litigation.

<http://www.allianceforjustice.org/>

*Alliance for Justice*

(202) 822-6070

National association of environmental, civil rights, mental health, women's, children's and consumer advocacy organizations that has advocacy for judicial selection, non-profits, foundations, and students.

<http://www.lgirtf.org/>

*Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force (LGIRTF)*

212.714.2904

Non-profit organization who advocate those in the GLBT community and immigrants who are living with HIV/AIDS by combating discriminatory practices and immigration laws, offering free clinics, and holding support group meetings and educational programs.

### **Human Rights:**

<http://www.lchr.org/>

*Lawyers Committee for Human Rights*

(212) 845 5200

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International organization that supports human rights activists who fight peacefully for basic freedoms at the local level; protects persecuted and repressed refugees; advocates workers' rights; and helps create a strong international justice and accountability system for human rights offenses.

<http://www.iglhrc.org/>

*International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC)*

415-561-0633

U.S. based non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) that seeks to secure human rights against discrimination or abuse due to sexual orientation/ expression, gender identity/expression, or HIV status through advocacy, documentation, coalition building, public education, and technical assistance.

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## **Appendix B What to Say About Sex**

This document offers some simple suggestions on approaches to discussing sex, particularly as it relates to common situations that sexual freedom activists may encounter. It was prepared with input from the executive directors of GLBT organization about issues affecting them and those knowledgeable about how to deal with GLBT issues surrounding sex effectively. The Woodhull Freedom Foundation and its allies are developing other more comprehensive sound bites and tools to lessen the impact of “sex as a weapon” as currently used by the radical right.

First, in any situation, it is important to gauge the “intent” of the individual making the comment or asking the question. Is this an ultra-conservative publication, reporter, or politician, or is it someone who is sympathetic to the issues?

### **General Techniques That Work Effectively:**

- Being proactive about introducing the subject first or bringing up “onerous” topics once the subject has been introduced into conversation and it seems likely that the other party is moving to “attack”. This takes away the “shock value” the other party has in introducing the topic in an inflammatory manner first. Simply stated, “The best defense is a good offense.”
- Using direct, confrontational responses to insensitive and inappropriate comments or attacks related to sex and/or sexuality. This is usually best done in an “off the record” conversation with media (when possible, of course), or by taking the conversation “off-line for a minute” with politicians and others.
- Making the other party feel “small” or embarrassing them for trivializing or minimizing issues of civil rights by sensationalizing sex. This technique is particularly effective in public speaking or live media situations involving inappropriate comments, jokes or attacks.
- Disputing the incorrect and faulty research used by the radical right to perpetuate myths.
- Being very comfortable talking about issues of sex and sexuality and maintaining a sense of confidence and sense of humor, which is often helpful in a public discourse on sex.

### **Suggestions on What to Say About Sex**

#### **Broad Statements**

- The pluralist argument: Americans take a pluralistic stance in religious and political choices. We say we believe that each religion has a right to its way of practicing its faith and that each political party has a right to its specific platform and legislative goals. You may think one religion or

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party is better than another is, but you would never try to have your choice taught in the public schools and imposed by law on everyone. Such a pluralistic approach is considered a fundamental part of our constitutional rights in this country. But in sexuality we don't openly voice our support of sexual standards other than abstinence even when we believe in them. And we are much less tolerant of differences in sexual practices and in ideas about sex.

- Discuss “the freedom to love” and “loving relationships”, which in normal, healthy relationships includes sex. If this involves a form of alternative sexual expression or non-traditional sex (e.g. anything other than the missionary position), talk about the issue in terms of the right to love the way you want, which includes sex in healthy adult relationships, providing it is consensual and not harmful. Use terms to discuss non-traditional sex such as “recognized as a normal and healthy form of sexual expression.”

### **Specific Things to Say About Sex Regarding:**

#### **Sodomy**

- Mom loses custody. “She’s breaking the law, so how can she be a fit parent?” Respond with “Sodomy is practiced by the majority of the American adult population, sometimes in states that also make it illegal for married, heterosexual couples in the privacy of their own bedrooms. Should they lose custody of their children for this reason? This is clearly a case of using antiquated sex laws to discriminate against a minority. How many heterosexual couples lose custody for sodomy in the U.S.? Why are the laws only used against GLBT people? Plus, what about the basic American right of privacy for adults to engage in loving, consensual sex in their own home? This is clearly not about sex, it is about bias and prejudice against a minority.”
- Selective enforcement related to public sex. Respond with, “This is a sensitive and controversial issue, even within our communities. I understand the concern that some people who see a public sex act may be offended. But this issue is closely bound up with freedom of expression and especially with the whole concept of “coming out” which means in its broadest sense, a person’s decision to no longer conceal his or her sexuality. It is important that we all discuss this issue rationally and not emotionally, and focus on the reasons behind these incidents and why gay men are targeted for arrest and “singled out” by law enforcement. This is not about sex—it is about bias, prejudice and discrimination against a minority.”

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## Youth

- In high school, refer to them as “young adults” and talk about the importance of this type of knowledge to their “emergence” as adults. Regarding clubs in schools, refute and dispute that “These clubs promote an unhealthy lifestyle and encourage sexual practices that are dangerous and immoral.” Respond with, “These clubs don’t deal with issues of sex and are no different than any other high school club in that respect.” Use a direct comparison to something like the “Rotary” club.
- In elementary school, discussions should be more general in nature; a good focus at that level is that pre-teens are increasingly likely to begin exploring sex and we need to find ways for them to get information that is medically and emotionally sound.

## Hate Crimes

- “He made a pass at me in the bar.” Respond with, “What if Matthew Shepherd did make a pass? He didn’t deserve what happened. What if every woman in America who had ever been hit on in a bar used this excuse? (Or, in a more confrontational situation that allows an “off the record” conversation “What if Matthew Shepherd did stick his tongue in his ear and put his hand on his crotch, it still doesn’t justify his being tortured and killed.”)

## GLBT folks are “oversexed” or “always having sex”

- Once again, refer to this as a false stereotype perpetuated by the radical right with no scientific basis. It is also appropriate to expand this discussion into how even hand holding in public by GLBT partners is often portrayed by the radical right as “overt sexual activity”, even when the activity is a normal and publicly accepted sign of affection in a loving relationship.

## Transgender Issues

- Stress that these issues are more about identity than about sex. Also, a transgendered person may be gay, but is at least equally likely not to be gay. Many people are curious about how transgendered people have sex and ask this insensitive question. A good response is, “Just like any one else, but this isn’t about sex. It’s about the serious discrimination and persecution that persists exactly because of the sensationalistic focus on sex such as questions like this one.”

## The “sick joke or attack” in public

- When circumstances arise related to crude jokes or attacks in public related to sex, such as talk shows or public forums, use responses intended to embarrass the other party and change the subject. Use responses like, “I’d like to ask you how you think your inappropriate question/comment made those gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender

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folks sitting here with us tonight feel? I'm here to have a dialogue about serious civil rights issues affecting GLBT people, not provide a vehicle for crude entertainment or inappropriate discussions.”

### **Introducing sex politically**

- It may be useful to begin by saying that these are issues on which many people hold strong and sensitive emotional opinions. But then stress that if we can't discuss sex issues in rational, objective, scientific terms, we leave people in the dark and create health risks and emotional problems and make discrimination and bigotry more likely.