

LOBBYING

INFORMATION BULLETIN



PART 1 OF 2

WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING AND LOBBYING?

The terms campaigning and lobbying are often used interchangeably, but it is worth considering the difference between the terms and thinking about whether one, or other, or both actions are likely to suit your purposes.

Lobbying is the practice of individuals and organisations trying to influence the opinion of political decision makers.

Campaigning, on the other hand, is the process of mobilising others to take action to challenge the powerful to make decisions to help the powerless. It means making and using organised, planned actions on specific issues with the aim of changing the policies or behaviours of different bodies.

So, lobbying techniques might be used as part of the bigger process of campaigning.

HOW TO PLAN A CAMPAIGN

The critically important word here is "planning". You should certainly spend time planning your campaign before embarking on ad hoc activities. Taking time out to think about the whole campaign cycle will give you a higher chance of success. One of the more common pitfalls of campaign activity is to jump straight into thinking about what campaign techniques and tactics to use without first doing the planning work. Technique selection should be one of the final steps in the planning process as they should derive from and be informed by all the planning work.

Below are some of the key issues you should think about when planning your campaign:

1. SELECT YOUR ISSUE CAREFULLY

- What issues are important to you or your group/stakeholders?
- Is there an opportunity to achieve change - what is happening in the external environment that makes this a good (or a bad) time to campaign?
- Is there a consensus about what needs to be done?
- Can you present a solution rather than a problem? It is much easier to campaign for a solution i.e. specific things that you want changed or implemented, rather than simply saying you don't like the way things are at the moment.

2. RESOURCES/MATERIALS

- What resources do you have e.g. staff capacity/ volunteers and supporters?
- What resources do you need e.g. campaign materials, publications?
- Do you have a dedicated budget for this work?

3. DEVELOP A STRONG EVIDENCE BASE

- Legitimacy is essential - does your evidence come from technical expertise and/or representative experience?
- Do you need to commission some research or do some research yourself?
- Are there other sources of information / statistics you can draw on?
- Make sure your research is relevant e.g. you need N.I. statistics for a N.I. campaign.
- Try to locate case studies and real-life examples - these can be extremely powerful and can be more likely to be picked up by the media than dry narrative.



4. ESTABLISH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCES

- Make sure you are approaching the people who have the power to change things – especially important in a devolved context when some responsibilities lie in Northern Ireland and some remain in the UK.

5. ESTABLISH CAMPAIGN AIMS & KEY MESSAGES

- Frame your messages appropriately for your audience(s). For example, a tabloid newspaper may respond better to an emotive human interest story, whereas a civil servant may require more factual, clearly sourced information.
- Be specific - think about a few very specific changes that you would like to see and develop some key messages that can be delivered simply and effectively.
- Try to focus on solutions. *Propose something that decision makers have to oppose*

6. CONSIDER POTENTIAL ALLIES/STAKEHOLDERS

- Alliances can be very effective especially if they are cross sector and/or unexpected. Which other groups are affected by your issue?
- Who may have an interest in this? Political allies can be useful, look at politicians' areas of interest.

7. CONSIDER POTENTIAL OPPOSITION AND OBSTACLES TO YOUR CAMPAIGN

- Who may oppose your campaign – can you work with them from the start to alleviate concerns? If not, can you anticipate their concerns and be prepared to respond.
- Be aware of the external environment and how political changes may affect your campaign.

8. DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTIVITIES WITH TIMESCALES

- What are you actually going to do? There are a whole host of campaign techniques select the ones that are right for you given your capacity, your issue, your audience and your aims.
- Timescales are important – if you need to do research or scope the issue with stakeholders then allow time for this in your campaign planning.
- Think about short and long term objectives in the campaign e.g. securing a place at the decision making table might be a short term with the long term aim of delivering different decisions

9. THE TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE TO DELIVER YOUR CAMPAIGN MESSAGES AND GATHER SUPPORT

- How do you plan to use the media, if at all?
- Could you develop an e-campaign?
- How could you use the internet?
- Are you producing publicity/reports and if so what are you going to do with them?
- How will you launch the campaign?

MONITOR AND EVALUATE YOUR CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

WHAT WOULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Take time to reflect and evaluate and adapt the campaign if necessary

Try to monitor where your campaigning has had an effect e.g. if you send a briefing to Assembly Members check to see if they quoted it or used it.

Celebrate all successes but remember that change can take a very long time.

If you manage to secure a change in policy, don't celebrate too soon because it is the implementation that really matters.



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