

Who-What-How

Narrative Strategy for Issue Campaigns

WHO

What constituencies do we need to reach to move our narrative?

In order to move our narrative, name the groups of people who we need to reach. Try to be as specific as you can and think beyond immediate members of your own organization, to identify the larger social forces you'd need to organize to win. For example, you might think about people by groupings such as political affiliation, race, income, gender, age, and gender, but also according to life experience, preferences, institutional affiliations, media consumption habits, and so on.

Audience Name	Constituencies
<p>Base & Allies <i>Not just our own member leaders, or members of allied organizations, but broad social groups who are already aligned with our values and narrative and can be moved to take action.</i></p>	
<p>Persuadables <i>Broad social groups who aren't aligned with our values and narrative, but can be persuaded to join us.</i></p>	

WHAT

What is the narrative we want to advance in this campaign?

What is the big idea you want to move at the issue level? Think one-level up from any particular tactic or policy - perhaps even one step above your current issue cut or campaign as well. What is the big idea that can tie all that work together by helping you win your current fight and setting the stage for the next campaign? A good narrative includes both values and ideas about how the world could work. (For example, campaigns related to Medicare for All or prescription drugs pricing might use the narrative: Everyone deserves to get the health care they need. That's why we need to take profits out of healthcare.)

What messages can we use to move our narrative?

In order for our narrative to take hold, we need to drive that narrative using values-based messaging. These messages explain your big idea and how it fits into the current conversation about a particular issue. If there are powerful and popular metaphors, images, concepts, or symbols you can draw on, be sure to record those as well.

Message Component	Message
Values <i>What values do you hold?</i>	
Violation <i>How are those values being violated and by who?</i>	
Aspiration <i>How would the world work if it reflected your values?</i>	
Solution <i>Demand + Call to Action</i>	

HOW

What tactics and opportunities can we use to advance our narrative and move these constituencies?

You might identify things like: door knocking/canvassing, letters to the editor, direct action, press conference with elected officials, policy reports, etc. Consider upcoming events (or anticipated rapid-response scenarios) that drive conversation and media attention to your issue. Be specific.

Tactic/Opportunity	What makes this tactic effective? With which constituencies?

Who are the messengers and storytellers that we think can most effectively deliver these messages and move this narrative?

You can list individual leaders, but also kinds of leaders (Working mothers, city officials, pastors, undocumented immigrants, lawyers, etc.) or people with particular kinds of stories based on their identities and life experiences. Use the chart below to list messengers and think about how they might be effective messengers or storytellers. These are great people to invite to speak at a rally or action or to quote in a press release or on social media.

Messengers	What makes them an effective messenger? To which constituency?

What partners do we need to work with to move our narrative effectively?

Narrative change is a team sport. No single organization or individual has the power to shift the narrative alone. That's why it's crucial you think about other organizations and individuals who can be partners in your narrative shift efforts. Push yourself to think about organizational allies and individuals who go beyond the usual suspects.

Organization/Person	How can they help?