

*COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES
FOR ACTIVISTS*

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what's the point of demonstrations and rallies?

communication

- of the issue
- of the event
- of the grievance[s]

with the intent of

- informing
- changing minds
- spurring to action

strategy

a plan, method, or series of maneuvers or stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result.

example: the goal is to inform people about the widening economic disparity in america. one strategy is to have a march.

five factors that should inform your strategy:

MESSAGE

what do i have to say?

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

through what channel will i say it?

FORMATS

what physical form will it take?

AUDIENCE

to whom am i speaking?

CONTEXT

what are the surroundings?

ALL FACTORS ARE INTERRELATED

always consider one issue in light of the others

MESSAGE

what do i have to say?

1 IDENTIFY THE NEED

- what needs to be said?
- to whom?

2 CREATE THE CONTENT

- what is the most critical point?
- how to distill it clearly for the audience?
- what will resonate best with your audience?

3 GIVE IT FORM BASED ON

- context
- audience

MESSAGE

what do i have to say?

context and *audience* will always help determine what's most appropriate.

it's critical to put yourself in others' shoes.

what media and materials are available?

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

through what channel will i say it?

image

text

voice

music

sound effects

channels always appear
within a particular format.

ex: an image in a book,
an image on a poster.

FORMATS

what physical form will it take?

pamphlets

books

posters

billboards

web video

speech

panel talk

theater

audio media

- radio show

- mp3 / podcast

- narration

- voice-over

zines

flyers

banners

television

website

conversation

concert

FORMATS

what physical form will it take?

conventional formats

+ effective and convenient

- commonplace, easy to ignore

be inventive

create hybrid forms

ex: poster/stencil

AUDIENCE

to whom am i speaking?

within the context of a march or rally,
the various audiences may be:

pedestrians

vehicle traffic

media

other activists

consider scale

large vs small

or

mass vs personal

AUDIENCE

to whom am i speaking?

always consider the audience in terms of their
“headspace” – how they relate to the issue.

ask yourself

are they ready to listen?

do they know facts?

accept the ideas?

already acting on the opinion?

advocate for the cause?

CONTEXT

what are the surroundings?

PHYSICAL

size of the space

surroundings

→ changing, as in a march, or not changing

distance to audience

weather conditions

SEQUENTIAL

what messages or activities came
before this event?

what is the current situation?

what will come next?

how do we move from A to B to C?

HOW TO MAKE THE COMMUNICATION MEMORABLE?

creativity = asking questions

question about media:

what if we combined virtual and physical demonstrations?

how can we get the maximum size out of “normal” poster materials?

question about audience:

how can we keep the message in front of cars longer?

question about physical context:

what if intersections were treated as info booths for traffic?

ANALYSIS / CRITIQUE

how can we improve on past experiences?

what worked well?

what did not work well?

reflection is always important
for improvement.