SUCCESS IN POLICY CAMPAIGNS: FIVE PHASES TO VICTORY

The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing has developed this description of the five phases in a policy campaign to help you develop a strong and successful campaign. By following these phases, your campaign will not neglect essential early activities which set the stage for a successful campaign during Phase 4.

The phases describe distinct periods in the campaign process and are generally to be completed in order. However, the phases presented in this document are guidelines, not unbendable rules. In fact, once you have completed a phase you should continue those activities throughout the remainder of the campaign – assessing the environment, refining your strategy, and recruiting new supporters.
PHASE 1

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AND ASSESSMENT (4-16 WEEKS)

In the preliminary phase you will move from an initial problem that the coalition wants to solve to a solid policy goal that is specific, attainable, and will address the identified problem in your specific jurisdiction (i.e. city, county, college campus). You will also gather more information to inform your campaign efforts. You will need to assess the political environment to identify local problems, issues, and resources that might affect your campaign. It is also important to gather information through public health data, youth purchase surveys, survey retail stores, make observations at points of sale, and gather public opinion surveys on the issue. Identify existing policies related to your issue that have passed in the area, both legislated and voluntary. Research how these policies were passed, who the supporters and opposition were, and identify stakeholders in the community. Additional information can be gathered by conducting informal interviews with several people, and talking to people within your office, coalition, and community about past experiences with your identified issue. Informal interviews can also help you gain support for your effort. There are several tools you and your coalition can use to assess your political environment in a way which will contribute to developing a winning strategy. These include the Political Environment Checklist and the Decision Maker Profile form.

PHASE 2

STRATEGY AND PLANNING (8- WEEKS)

Your coalition should use the information and resources compiled in Phase 1 to help you create a strategic plan for your policy campaign, which will include allies, tactics, and timelines. The main activity of this phase is bring together community members for a meeting to develop a strategy using the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart. As part of the Strategy Chart, you will establish a rough timeline for your campaign, identify specific components of the policy and create an approach to convince key decision makers, identified in Phase 1 and the Decision Maker Matrix, to adopt the policy. To develop your Strategy Chart, involve people who you think will be core members of your campaign coalition, but don’t forget to include others who may have critical knowledge and experience such as political consultants, former elected officials, and key community leaders. Use the Decision Maker Matrix and the Circles of Influence to enhance your strategy discussion. These should be completed prior to your Strategy Chart planning meeting.
PHASE 3

PHASE 3 – RECRUITMENT (8-12 WEEKS)

In this phase, you and your coalition will conduct strategic activities aimed specifically at recruiting and onboarding new coalition members who can influence your campaign targets, the undecided decisionmakers. Some of these activities include: training your core group to conduct one-on-one recruiting meetings with key opinion leaders, making presentations to organizations, having one-on-one meetings with prospective new coalition members, and attending community social events. All these recruitment efforts won’t automatically lead to new members at your coalition meetings. Investing in new members takes time, however, it will help you identify people with special skills and contacts who can help on specific tasks later in the campaign.

Phase 3 Checklist:
- Recruit and train new coalition members
- Attend relevant community social events

PHASE 4

PHASE 4 – THE CAMPAIGN (4-8 MONTHS)

Before launching Phase 4, revisit the Strategy Chart and timeline with the new coalition members you recruited in Phase 3. In particular, review campaign tactics since they need to be compatible with the coalition or campaign committee that now includes the new members. Once that is done, you are in full campaign mode. In this phase, you and the allies you have recruited in Phase 3, will implement the tactics identified in your Strategy Chart in Phase 2. Tactics put pressure on your decision makers to give you what you want, which is your campaign goal. During this phase of the campaign, your coalition will draft language for your proposed policy, collect endorsements, present to community groups, propose the policy to decision makers, meet with elected officials and testify at city council meetings.

Phase 4 Checklist:
- Show new coalition members Strategy Chart
- Draft language for your proposed policy
- Carry out campaign tactics

PHASE 5

PHASE 5 – IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

After your campaign goal is achieved, which usually means the adoption of a policy, it’s time to evaluate and implement your policy. Evaluate where the coalition did well and what can be improved for future policy campaigns. Devote time and activities to ensure the implementation process is successful. Many tobacco policies are self-enforcing, or complaint driven, so make it a priority for your coalition to ensure your policy will be enforced. It is also critical during this phase to revisit relationships with elected officials and staff to make sure the implementation of the policy is fruitful. Use the evaluation results to leverage greater enforcement if necessary, or as the basis for publicizing the policy's success.

Phase 5 Checklist:
- Evaluate and implement policy
- Revisit relationships with elected officials and staff