



COMMUNICATE JUSTICE 101

The Organizers' Essential Guide to Strategic Communications | Brought to You By the Youth Media Council





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Front Cover: Imerald Bay at YMC's Unplug Clear Channel Action, September 2005.
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Introduction

BECOME THE STRATEGIC STORYTELLERS THAT MOVEMENTS FOR JUSTICE NEED

THE POWER OF STORIES

We know how much media and culture impact our daily lives. All you have to do is turn on the television or radio, or

open up a newspaper or magazine to find stories that explain, justify, or challenge the policies and institutions that shape the conditions in which we live. Stories are powerful. How these important stories are told, who gets to tell them, and who owns the infrastructure through which they pass are important pieces on

the chessboard of justice. The news is one of the most powerful instruments of official storytelling that exists, and the U.S. media is among the most influential storytellers in the world. Studies have repeatedly shown that domestic and international U.S. policymaking increasingly follows the agenda set by the press, making the capacity to tell compelling stories essential to every campaign for social change. Organizers for justice recognize the need to tell powerful stories that shift how the public thinks about the role of government, expose who's responsible for change, and influence the outcome of critical policy issues. What most organizers don't know is how to become the

strategic storytellers that movements for justice need to effect the radical progressive change we seek.

RACISM AND MEDIA BIAS

Movement sectors dedicated to racial justice, economic and gender equity, and youth rights are particularly vulnerable to the use of media bias to scapegoat historically disenfranchised communities, and to cloak the mechanics of structural oppression. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, millions watched as the impoverished black communities of New Orleans waded through troubled high water seeking the two things most precious to us all: safety and justice. Instead of either, survivors found themselves described by news coverage as "looters" or blamed for the poverty that prevented many from evacuating. Like many communities in the U.S., the survivors of Hurricane Katrina encountered a deadly combination of social apathy, economic exploitation, and political disenfranchisement justified by media coverage steeped in racial stereotypes. Some died in New Orleans as a direct result of levee failure, but most suffered in the aftermath from systemic human failure—the failure of decision-makers to break free of institutional rules that favor the white and wealthy over the poor and black and brown, and the failure of news media to tell deeper stories of →

poor blacks and immigrants caught in the gears of structural racism, and how they fought and are fighting back.

Hurricane Katrina was only one of several recent national crises that both increased the threat to poor and working class communities of color and presented an

opportunity for a national dialogue about racial and economic justice. But as with the aftermath of September 11th, conditions in the Gulf Coast have barely improved. What has persisted is the naked truth that in order to make concrete changes in people's lives, coverage of race and racism in America must also change. →

RACING AGE

The last four decades of conservative influence over media and public opinion have left youth and communities of color caught in a peculiar crossfire of race and age-based media bias. From a "war on poverty" in the 1960's, to the war against Vietnam in the 1970's, a Regan-Bush led "war on drugs" in the 1980's, and a Bush-Clinton led "war on crime" in the 1990's- national policy has been framed for more than four decades in the rhetoric of war. While initially used to communicate a unified national commitment to improving economic conditions for the nation's poorest communities, this framing has primarily been used to code racism in public policy, and scapegoat and criminalize communities of color. A core strategy of this attempt to embed and cloak explicit structural racism has been the "wedge issue"- and there has been no more influential wedge than the fear of youth of color. Whether the policy issue at hand is immigration, education, crime, poverty, or health care, media generated fear of children and youth of color has been used to divide communities of color. Media images of Black and Latino youth as "crack babies" and "superpredators" that emerged in the 80's and 90's have become entrenched in public discourse, justifying the rollback on affirmative action, the re-organization of welfare, mandatory minimums, and decapitating the impact of the national conversation on racism that saw its height in the 1960's. As a result, punitive zero-tolerance, loitering, anti-crime, anti-immigrant, and anti-abortion policies have criminalized and incarcerated a generation. Youth of color fought back, building vibrant organizations to respond to the laws and media images that targeted them. To navigate and transform the crossfire of racism and age-based bias in public debate, the youth organizing sector requires communications strategies and media activism with the power to address the racing of young age in media coverage of critical policy issues.

BUILDING MEDIA POWER, TRANSFORMING PUBLIC DEBATE: THE YOUTH MEDIA COUNCIL

Traditional communications frameworks suggest that organizers should not and cannot effectively confront issues of race and racism. The racist, xenophobic, and fear-mongering news coverage of September 11th, Sensenbrenner's H.R.4437, and Hurricane Katrina is testament to the fact that communications strategy and media activism must directly address structural racism to shift power relations and change people's lives. Organizing for racial, economic, and gendered justice requires new media strategies that combine sophisticated communications with constituency-led media activism to **directly confront media bias against youth, women, queer communities and immigrants and tell compelling stories of structural racism and systemic oppression**. It is out of this need that the Youth Media Council was born.

The Youth Media Council (YMC) is a member-driven media strategy and action center dedicated to building a strategic, collaborative movement for racial justice and youth rights. Launched in 2001 in response to bias against youth, and misrepresentation and racism in the media, our mission is to build the power of grassroots movements and disenfranchised communities to transform public debate and media policy in the service of justice.

MEDIA JUSTICE: AN AFFIRMATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MEDIA CHANGE

The particular media conditions faced by historically disenfranchised communities demand an affirmative and relevant change model to transform public debate, the outlets that mediate public conversations, and the rules that regulate those outlets, and build an alternative media system in the service of justice. Media Justice is a participatory, relevant, and strategic framework for media change that centers the leadership and participation of historically disenfranchised communities. Guided by a broad vision for social justice, this framework has five key assumptions:

- 1) Media change of all kinds must expose and directly confront the mechanics of structural racism and systemic oppression.
- 2) Leaders from historically marginalized communities must be developed as effective media activists and strategic movement communicators.
- 3) Media policy advocacy and strategic communications are more effective when clearly relevant to the primary justice issues of the movement for racial justice, economic and gender equity, and youth rights.
- 4) Compelling communications and media activism campaigns must be both rooted in critical issues and →

- coordinated across issue, sector, and region for national impact.
- 5) When justice sectors strengthen communications strategies, center the use of culture as a communications tool, employ winning frames and messages, and strengthen their influence over media rules and rights—the possibilities for transformative change skyrocket.

Traditional media reform and communications strategies are insufficient to

address structural racism in public debate and policy and create a media environment in which campaigns for racial justice, economic and gender equity, and youth rights can thrive. The Youth Media Council is dedicated to building a strong and effective movement for media justice and supporting organizing groups to incorporate media as a tool to reclaim our stories, reframe our humanity, strengthen our campaigns and determine our destinies. This toolkit is intended to be a contribution to that effort.

Making This Toolkit Work For You

USE IT TO HELP YOU WIN CAMPAIGNS. USE IT TO BUILD A PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE, BECAUSE JUSTICE JUST CAN'T WAIT!

This is a Media Justice toolkit that recognizes news and entertainment media as both an opportunity for and a potential barrier to justice. Whether you're a youth organizer who can't get access to reporters, or who gets misquoted because of age-based media bias, or whether you're an organizer of color trying to tell your campaign story despite widely held stereotypes, the *Communicate Justice 101* toolkit is for you. Use it to help you tell your stories. Use it to help you win campaigns. Use it to build a progressive movement for racial justice, because justice just can't wait!

While many communications toolkits provide resources and information to conduct general media work for social change, this *Communicate Justice 101* toolkit is designed to provide the tips and tools necessary to conduct effective media campaigns for youth rights and racial justice.

Each section of this toolkit focuses on a specific stage of strategic communications, and features instructions paired with easy-to-use worksheets and samples. Beginning with a tool to help organizers assess their media readiness and principles for effective media campaigns, this kit takes users on a journey from

landscaping and charting your media strategy, to conducting effective presswork, and documenting, evaluating, and sharing your communications work.

Section one shows you how to landscape media coverage of your issue to assist with campaign research and issue identification. Sections two and three will help you create a strategic media plan, a targeted press list, and effective messages and stories. Sections four and five provide samples and tools to support direct presswork for creative actions and other organizing tactics. In section six you will learn how to document, evaluate and share your successes and lessons learned.

Additional media action and issue-specific strategy resources are available at www.youthmediacouncil.org. Log in to find best practices and learn more about successful communications work done by organizing groups across the country, and sign up for our e-bulletins to plug into the growing movement for media justice!

And please let us know what you think about *Communicate Justice 101* by either filling out the form at the end of the toolkit and mailing it back to us, or going to the youthmediacouncil.org feedback section and sending an email to feedback@youthmediacouncil.org.

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Acknowledgements

This communications toolkit is the product of more than five years of Youth Media Council's work in the trenches of youth and racial justice organizing. From the explosive fight against Proposition 21 that gave rise to a new California youth movement and the growing intergenerational movement for education justice, to the Gulf Coast resistance to criminalization and punishment post-Katrina and the evolving cross-country struggle for community-based growth in the face of predatory development — the tools in this kit have been tried and tested through on the ground campaigns to defend our rights and build power for marginalized communities.

Thanks are due to the dozens of organizers and countless leaders who have helped us develop and sharpen our tools. For a list of the groups who contributed directly to this toolkit, please see the **PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS LIST (P. 179)** at the end of this kit.

Big, big thanks go to a few of our closest allies and mentors whose life work has provided the foundation for Youth Media Council's development: Hunter Cutting and Kim Deterline of We Interrupt this Message, Makani Themba-Nixon of the Praxis Project, Lori Dorfman of the Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG), and Taj James of the Movement Strategy Center. Thanks are also due to Charlotte Ryan and the Media Research and Action Project, for their seminal work in participatory communications.

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Last but not least, *Communicate Justice 101* would not have been possible without the dedicated guidance of Neelam Pathikonda, and the excellent design work of Christine Wong Yap.

WORKSHEET

The Four-Step Reality Check

AN ASSESSMENT TOOL TO DETERMINE WHAT YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE JUSTICE

Assess your organization or coalition's media readiness by checking off all the boxes that apply. This assessment will help you identify areas of work to focus on in order to make best use of this toolkit.

STEP 1: CHECK YOUR ORGANIZING STRATEGY

- Can you clearly state your short term and long term social change goals?
- Have you conducted a power analysis?
- Do you know who your primary and secondary targets are?

If you can't check all the boxes above, take a step back and define your organizing strategy. You can't communicate justice if you don't know what piece of justice you want. See the resources section for organizations that can support you in developing campaign strategy.

STEP 2: CHECK YOUR RESEARCH NEEDS

- Do you know what your primary and secondary targets are saying about this issue? Do you know what they really think about this issue? How does it compare with what you are saying?
- Do you know about your targets' weaknesses or contradictions?
- Do you understand the policy landscape on your issue?
- Do you know what solutions are being proposed in public debate on your issue?

If you can't check all the boxes above, pay special attention to Chapters 1 and 2 of this toolkit for research tips, tools and resources to support your communications strategy.

STEP 3: CHECK YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

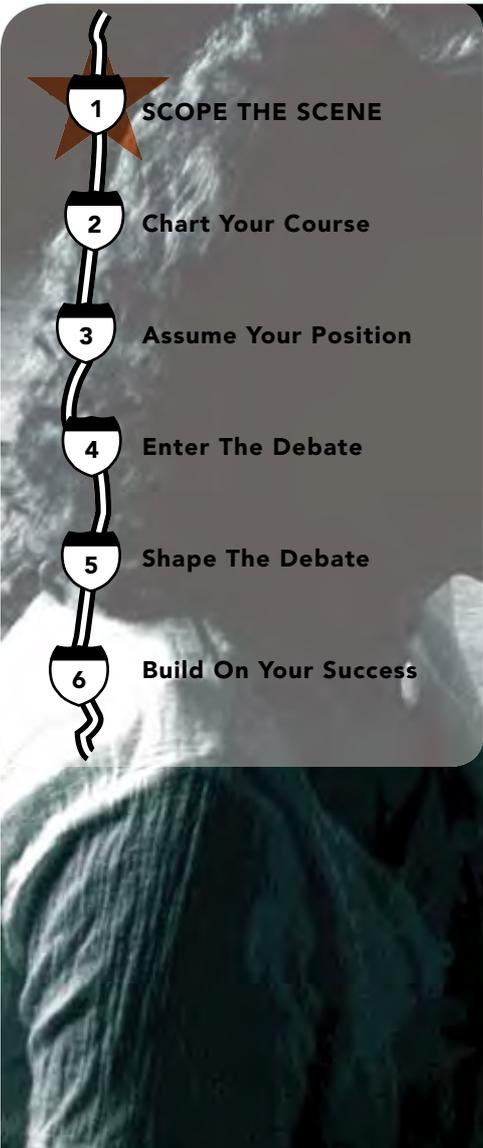
- Are you working in a coalition or alliance of other organizations on your issue?
- Do you have strong relationships with reporters who cover your issue?
- Have you addressed any previous negative history with outlets or reporters through editorial meetings or other tactics?

If you can't check the boxes above, pay special attention to Chapters 3 and 4 of this toolkit for relationship-building tips, tools and resources.

STEP 4: CHECK YOUR CAPACITY

- Have you evaluated and documented your past media coverage?
- Do you have someone in your organization responsible for media work?
- Do you have a process for conducting media work in your organization?
- Do you have a process for building media skills in your organization?
- Do you have resources to conduct media work?
- Do you have infrastructure for tracking your press contacts, press releases and press coverage?

If you can't check all the boxes above, pay special attention to Chapter 5 of this toolkit for capacity-building tips, tools and resources.



- 1 SCOPE THE SCENE
- 2 Chart Your Course
- 3 Assume Your Position
- 4 Enter The Debate
- 5 Shape The Debate
- 6 Build On Your Success

1. SCOPE THE SCENE

SCOPE THE SCENE



- 1. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS
- 2. MEDIA MONITORING

CHAPTER

1

SCOPE THE SCENE

DOING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WORK FOR YOUTH RIGHTS AND RACIAL JUSTICE IS LIKE TAKING A WELL-PLANNED ROAD TRIP.

Imagine you want to take a road trip to a place that looks just like your community, but better. There are several ways to get there. There are scenic byways, direct highways, and back-roads in between. The course you choose depends on the landscape that surrounds you. Are there traffic jams or roadblocks? Are there dangerous drivers on the road? Are there others you can caravan with who are trying to get to the same destination? Given all these questions, you decide to spend a few weeks – or even a few months – planning the trip of your life!

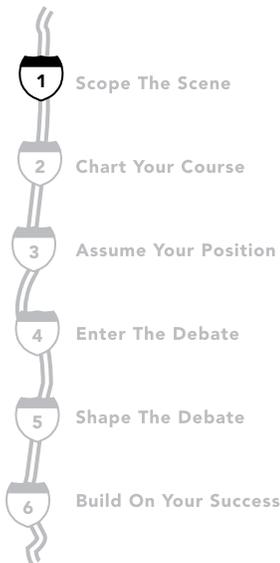
Doing effective communications work for youth rights and racial justice is like taking a well-planned road trip. As community organizers, we have limited time and resources, so it's in our interest to strategize before we jump in the car and

drive. When we invest time and energy into communications strategy up front, we reap the benefits of less wasted time, less wasted money, and more political impact on the path to social justice.

So how do you ensure that the road trip you take is the most strategic to reach your destination? Well, Confucious said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Take that first step by scoping the scene around your issue.

The tips and tools in this module will help you develop a landscape analysis of your issue through policy research questions and media monitoring. You can apply this module when you are in research and issue identification stage of your organizing campaign, or to ongoing research to sharpen your campaign strategy.

Special thanks go out to The Praxis Project for their analysis and tools on landscaping and issue identification.



GLOSSARY

Landscaping: the process of analyzing the current state of policy and public debate on an issue

Landscape Analysis: the outcome of landscaping – an assessment that can be used to develop organizing and communications strategy

Media monitoring: the ongoing process of documenting and analyzing on media coverage of your issue.

Media Bias: unbalanced content that fails to tell a full story

Media Outlet: a media publication, website or broadcast station. For example, the *LA Times*, your local news radio station, and your local ABC station are all media outlets.

Media Format: refers to different types of media. For example print, TV, radio and web.

Policy Monitoring: the ongoing process of documenting and analyzing policy developments on your issue

Public Debate: what people are saying about current events and issues in public forums like the news and entertainment media

Public Opinion: what specific populations of people think about current events and issues, often determined through monitoring media coverage, public opinion polling, or focus groups

Public Opinion Monitoring: the ongoing process of documenting and analyzing what specific populations of people believe about your issue.

Policy Debate: what lawmakers are saying about an issue, and what legislation these lawmakers are trying to pass or introduce

Stereotype: An oversimplified idea of a group of people, reinforced by media through labels (like “gangbanger” or “rowdy youth”), simplified characters, and loaded images.

SCOPE THE SCENE: SECTION 1

Landscaping

WHAT IT IS

To achieve your communications goals, and ultimately your social change goals, you first have to understand the landscape of policy and opinion you're trying to shape. Communicating without landscaping is like driving in a new city without a map. By landscaping policy and opinion, you get a sense of what key players are thinking, saying and doing on your issue.

The goal of landscaping is to develop an analysis that supports issue identification, campaign development, and communications strategy. A lot of radical organizing groups get caught up in this landscaping stage. We tend to think that our deep analysis automatically translates into moving messages. It's hard to move from analysis to communications without knowing that developing this analysis is just the very first step

on the road to communicating justice. Master this step and you'll be well positioned to *apply* your analysis through a strategic media plan (see **CHART YOUR COURSE: MEDIA PLANNING, P. 33**), and *translate* your analysis into frames, messages and stories that move people to action (see **CHART YOUR COURSE: BIG PICTURE FRAMING, P. 27**, and **ASSUME YOUR POSITION: MESSAGING & STORYTELLING, P. 57 & 74**).

WHAT YOU DO

Developing a landscape analysis involves three elements: policy monitoring, public opinion monitoring, and general research.

This section helps you with the broad strokes of developing landscape analysis. The next section focuses on two primary methods for landscaping: media monitoring and content analysis. →

5 Steps to Developing a Landscape Analysis

- 1. Map out what you know.** Use the **LANDSCAPING CHECKLIST (P. 16)** to identify the pieces of your landscape that you already understand.
- 2. Map out what you don't know.** Use the **LANDSCAPING CHECKLIST (P. 16)** to identify research questions that will help you fill out your analysis.
- 3. Create a plan for how to answer these questions.** Use the **LANDSCAPING PLAN (P. 15)** to map out research tasks, duties and timeline.
- 4. Do the work.**
- 5. Come back to the checklist.** Can you check off most items on the list? If so, you're ready to move on.

Using the information you learn from media monitoring, and from research you might gather in partnership with policy and public opinion polling organizations (see **SCOPE THE SCENE: RESOURCES, P. 23**), you can begin to develop a landscape analysis that will help you construct your frame.

HOW YOU SHARE IT

Analysis development is a great way for organizing staff and leaders to build a collective understanding of your issue. You can set up a series of facilitated dis-

cussions with staff and leaders to flesh out answers to research questions and identify areas of agreement and disagreement. Provide relevant readings and summaries from **MEDIA MONITORING** (see **P. 17**), and make the discussions fun by including multimedia resources that spark discussion, like relevant TV or web clips.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **LANDSCAPING PLAN, P. 15**
- **CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING A LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS, P. 16**

WORKSHEET

Landscaping Plan

Policy Monitoring	Public Opinion Monitoring	Background Research
<p>What method(s) will you use: CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY</p> <p>Partner with a policy research group or individual researcher, <i>specify:</i></p> <p>Monitor a policy website or other policy news source, <i>what sources:</i></p> <p>Get insider information from a policy contact, <i>who:</i></p>	<p>What method(s) will you use: CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY</p> <p>Conduct a public opinion poll/survey</p> <p>Conduct media monitoring (SEE P. 17)</p> <p>Conduct a media content analysis (SEE P. 20)</p> <p>Partner with an institution to do the above (specify which method and which institution):</p>	<p>What method(s) will you use: CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY</p> <p>Conduct web research, <i>which sites:</i></p> <p>Conduct archival research, <i>where:</i></p> <p>Conduct interviews, <i>with who:</i></p>
<p>What policy questions will you answer:</p>	<p>What public opinion questions will you answer:</p>	<p>What other research questions will you answer:</p>
<p>Who will do this work?</p> <p>By when?</p>	<p>Who will do this work?</p> <p>By when?</p>	<p>Who will do this work?</p> <p>By when?</p>

WORKSHEET

Checklist for Developing a Landscape Analysis

CURRENT CONDITIONS**\$ and Power**

- ✓ Who decides? Who usually makes decisions on your issue?
- ✓ Who was left out?
- ✓ Who has influence?
- ✓ Who got paid as a result?

POLICIES

- ✓ What laws have led up to or resulted in current policies/problems?
- ✓ What corporate rules or government regulations affect this issue?
- ✓ What decision-making processes are involved?
- ✓ Are these processes transparent/accountable?

IMPACT

- ✓ Privilege: Who benefits?
- ✓ Pain: Who loses?

WHAT WE NEED TO WIN**We need base**

- ✓ Where is our base?
- ✓ What's our infrastructure for being in touch/building/moving our base?
(canvassing, registration, database, phoning, events, etc.)

We need to shift the public conversation

- ✓ Know our own solutions and why they work
- ✓ Unveiling the "hidden transcript": What's being implied but not explicitly said?
- ✓ Plan for the long term

We need to know what we want

- ✓ Research and documentation
- ✓ Alternative, understandable proposals

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SCOPE THE SCENE: SECTION 2

Media Monitoring

WHAT IT IS

Media monitoring is an effective method for landscaping public opinion on your issue. To put it simply, media monitoring is the ongoing process of documenting and reflecting on coverage of your issue. You can then apply your findings to your landscape analysis, to developing and sharpening your campaign strategy (see **CHART YOUR COURSE, P. 26**), and to developing and sharpening your media frames and messages (see **ASSUME YOUR POSITION, P. 59**).

As youth and racial justice organizers, media monitoring is also an important way to

document how widely-held stereotypes are reinforced through biased media coverage. As media becomes increasingly consolidated, news stories are becoming less and less complex. Journalists face increasing pressure to produce sensational stories with less depth and context than ever before. The result is that more stories rely on stereotyped characters, and have fewer sources and perspectives than before.

The first step to challenging this media bias is to document it through media monitoring. By documenting media bias you can then pro-actively confront it through your communications strategy and tactics. →

WHAT YOU DO

1. Create your monitoring plan.

Use the **MEDIA MONITORING PLAN (P. 19)** worksheet to create your outlet list and plan. Check out the worksheet for examples of print, TV, radio and web outlets to monitor.

2. Prep your monitoring materials.

Use the **TIPS FOR MONITORING DIFFERENT MEDIA FORMATS (P. 22)** to assess what you need to do monitoring.

3. Do the monitoring.

Once you've created your monitoring plan, you're ready to conduct monitoring. Use the **MEDIA MONITORING CHART (P. 20)** and accompanying guiding questions to document what you find in coverage.

4. Apply your findings to your landscape analysis, or to sharpening ongoing campaign strategy.

Use the **MEDIA MONITORING PLAN (P. 19)** worksheet to create a plan for doing this.

HOW YOU SHARE IT

Discussing media coverage of your issue can be a good way to start staff or member meetings. If done regularly, monitoring “check-ins” can help build your analysis and help build the media literacy of staff and members. In the course of your monitoring, select key stories to bring to these meetings. Start the meetings with a review of the coverage (TV web and radio clips work especially well for these check-ins) and then throw out a few questions from the **MONITORING CHART (P. 20)** to spark discussion.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **MEDIA MONITORING PLAN, P. 19**
- **MEDIA MONITORING CHART, P. 20**
- **USING THE MEDIA MONITORING CHART GUIDELINES, P. 21**
- **TIPS FOR MONITORING DIFFERENT MEDIA FORMATS, P. 22**

WORKSHEET

Media Monitoring Plan

	Print (NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, ETC.)	Radio (NEWS RADIO, MUSIC STATIONS, ETC.)	TV (LOCAL NEWS, TALK SHOWS, SITCOMS ETC.)	Web (NEWS SITES, BLOGS ETC.)
Which media outlets reach key decision-makers on your issue?				
Which media outlets reach your constituency or base?				
Of the above, which outlet or outlets will you prioritize?				

What days will you monitor coverage? What times?

Who will do the monitoring?

How will you incorporate monitoring results into your landscape analysis?
(I.E., IF THROUGH DISCUSSION, WITH WHO AND WHEN?)

WORKSHEET

Media Monitoring Chart

TITLE OF STORY
OUTLET
REPORTER
DATE

	Names & Organizations	What do they say about the problem, the solution, & who's responsible?	What helpful images or language is used?	What stereotyping images or language is used?	What perspectives are missing?
Opponents					
Targets					
Allies					

GUIDELINES

Using The Media Monitoring Chart

- Identify characters and sources in coverage as 1) opponents (people or institutions with the power to maintain the problem and who will not be influenced), 2) targets (people or institutions who have the power to give you what you want and who can be influenced), and 3) allies (people or institutions who are aligned with your agenda).
- Write down key points in what these characters are saying. How do they describe the problem? Do they advance any solutions? Who do they say is responsible for the problem?
- Are there any helpful phrases or images that you can use to support your work?
- Take detailed notes on stereotyping language or images that could harm your work. For marginalized communities, landscaping predominant stereotypes in coverage is key to developing an effective communications strategy. Does every story about youth of color mention gangs? Count the number of times the word gang or gangbanger is mentioned in the week's news.
- Lastly, document missing perspectives and context. The absence of important perspectives and trends, facts and statistics constitutes bias that can hurt your work. Do stories about crime fail to mention falling crime rates? Are violence prevention advocates sourced less than prosecutors or police? By documenting stereotypes and bias you are equipped to challenge this bias in your own frames and messages.

WORKSHEET

Tips For Monitoring Different Media Formats



PRINT

- Decide which sections of your target print outlet you want to monitor. If you're monitoring a daily paper, you might want to choose just the front page and local sections. If you're monitoring a magazine, you might want to monitor just the images and feature stories.
- Cut out significant articles and file them in research files. You'll want to refer back to any articles that have key messages, facts, spokespeople, or bias that affects your issue.
- Pay attention to where stories appear in the outlet. Are they on the front page? Or buried in the back? Front page stories are more prominent and considered more influential.



TV

- Decide how often you want to monitor your target TV shows, and if you'll monitor the entire show or just portions of the show. For example, you might want to monitor the entire segment of an evening local news show, but only the leading stories, or first 20 minutes of an hour-long nightly news magazine.
- Figure out a system for recording your segments so you can refer back to them when needed. Use a good old-fashioned VCR recorder, a DVD recorder, or a system like TiVo.
- Pay special attention to the length of TV news segments. You might want to time them to document how much airtime is devoted to your issue. Also pay attention to how much coverage is just B-roll with the anchor reading on top of it, and how much coverage includes actual spokespeople being interviewed by a reporter. If spokespeople rarely get to speak for themselves on your issue, this is an incidence of bias worth noting and addressing through your campaign.



RADIO

- Decide which particular radio shows or segments you want to monitor from your target radio outlet. Do you want to monitor just the news headlines? A news talk show? Or entire segments of time, such as drive-time morning and afternoon programming?
- Figure out a system for recording your segments so you can refer back to them when needed. Use a good old-fashioned tape recorder or a recording tool like the radio shark.



WEB

- Decide which websites or blogs you want to monitor and how frequently.
- Print out significant articles or blogs to refer back to. They may not be "evergreen", meaning they might be gone tomorrow.
- You might want to track how far a significant article or blog is reaching by doing a keyword search and seeing how many places it's linked to. This is a measure of influence and prominence, and can give you an idea of where and to what audiences a particular message is being conveyed.

RESOURCES

MEDIA MONITORING

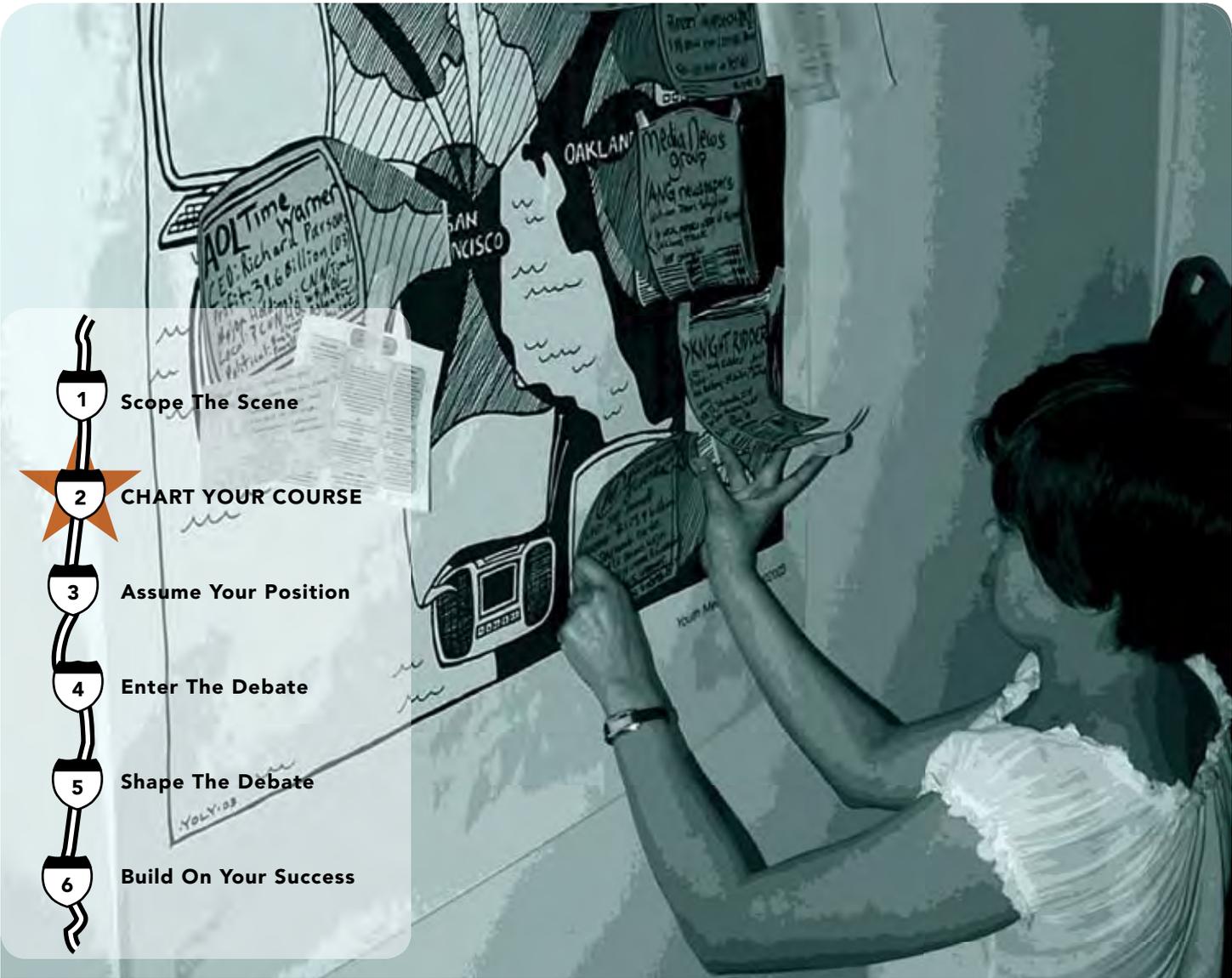
- Center for Media and Public Affairs: www.cmpa.com
- Berkeley Media Studies Group: www.bmsg.org
- Grade The News: www.gradethenews.org
- Grand Rapids Institute for Information Democracy: www.griid.org
- Youth Media Council: www.youthmediacouncil.org

POLICY MONITORING

- Datacenter: www.datacenter.org
- Drum Major Institute: www.drummajorinstitute.org
- PolicyLink: www.policylink.org
- Political Research Associates: www.publiceye.org
- The Praxis Project: www.thepraxisproject.org

PUBLIC OPINION POLLING

- The Gallup Poll: www.galluppoll.com
- The Pew Research Center: www.pewresearch.org
- Public Opinion Online: www.pollingreport.com



- 1 Scope The Scene
- 2 CHART YOUR COURSE**
- 3 Assume Your Position
- 4 Enter The Debate
- 5 Shape The Debate
- 6 Build On Your Success

2. CHART YOUR COURSE

CHART YOUR COURSE



1. LANDSCAPING

2. BIG-PICTURE FRAMING

3. COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

CHAPTER

2

CHART YOUR COURSE

Once you've scoped the scene and developed a landscape analysis, you're ready to chart your course for the road trip. Which course you take depends on your frame of mind – do you want to take the opportunity to expose yourself to countryside you never get to see? Or do you want this trip to be a joy ride straight toward your destination? Which course you take also depends on some practical issues at hand: you have a specific amount of time in which to complete your road trip, you don't have much money, you're facing obstacles and speed-bumps, and you have certain people to find along the way.

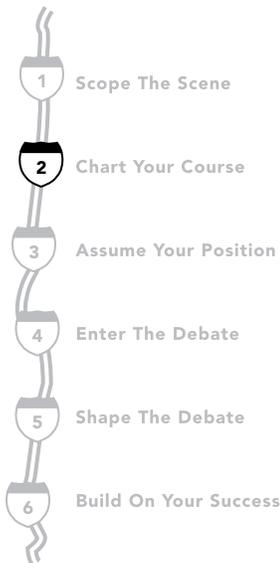
IF YOU TAKE THE TIME TO STRATEGIZE BEFORE SENDING OUT YOUR PRESS RELEASES AND CALLING UP REPORTERS YOUR RIDE WILL BE MUCH SMOOTHER.

If you take the time to strategize before sending out your press releases and calling up reporters your ride will be much smoother. In the end you'll save your organization priceless time and scarce money, and be much more effective at both reaching your short-term goals and setting the foundation for a long-term shift in public debate.

Refer back to your landscape analysis, set your frame of mind, and plan a strategic course to achieve your goals. Remember, any organization — no matter how small, how marginalized, or how inexperienced — can do effective media work if you plan for it. The overviews and tools in this section will help you accomplish this vital step on the road to communicating justice.

Landscaping and monitoring has helped you broadly identify the kinds of people who might help and hurt you along the way, some obstacles you're facing, and opportunities ahead. Based on this analysis, you can set your frame, plan your route and create the ultimate map for a rewarding trip.

Special thanks go to The Berkeley Media Studies Group, the Praxis Project and Hunter Cutting for the foundational concepts in the Big Picture Framing section, the Movement Strategy Center for the Us vs. Them framing tool, and additional thanks to the Praxis Project and We Interrupt This Message for the Media Planning Worksheet in the Planning Section.



GLOSSARY

Editor: a person in a media outlet responsible for assigning news stories and for determining the final content of a news story. Editors generally have more power than reporters to control what stories are placed, and what content is included and what gets cut out.

Framing: similar to how a picture frame determines the boundaries of a photo — what the viewer sees or doesn't see — framing is the strategic process of establishing the boundaries of a narrative. This includes your analysis of the problem, why it's important, and what can be done to solve it.

Media Bias: unbalanced content that fails to tell a full story

Media Planning: the process of identifying why you want to do media work, who you want to reach, how you're going to reach them, and what outcomes you want to achieve

News Hooks: opportunities that you can use to get your story covered in the news media

News Director: a person in a media outlet responsible for overall news quality and news planning for the outlet. Generally, the news director has more power than reporters and editors to determine what makes the news.

Piggybacking: the process of "jumping on" existing news by hooking your story to this news

Press List: a list of the media makers you want to target in your campaign. A press list includes contact information and notes that help you strategically build relationships with each individual.

Producer: a person in a broadcast outlet who oversees the content of news broadcasts. Their power and duties are similar to editors in print outlets.

Reporter: a person in a media outlet responsible for finding stories, interviewing sources and creating the content of a news story

Stereotypes: an oversimplified idea of a group of people, reinforced by media through labels (like "gangbanger" or "rowdy youth"), simplified characters, and loaded images

Target Audiences: The people you want to reach and move to action to support your goals

Tracking: a fancy word for "keeping track of" as in, keeping track of (tracking) reporters

Wire Service: a news agency that gathers and shares stories with media outlets that subscribe to the service. Examples are the Associated Press, Reuters and Bay City News in the California Bay Area.

CHART YOUR COURSE: SECTION 1

Big Picture Framing

WHAT IT IS

Given the landscape of your issue, you'll see that there are a lot of different ways to look at it. **Framing** will help you put boundaries on this landscape. Framing focuses your work on the most strategic slice or angle of your issue, so that you can channel your organizing and communications work toward a single concrete problem with clear solutions. For youth and racial justice organizers, framing allows you to choose an issue angle that exposes racial discrimination and spotlights policy solutions.

There are two kinds of frames in communications work – a big picture frame and a story frame. A big picture frame captures your values and the change you want to make. A big picture frame is like a wide-angle lens that captures a landscape in one snapshot, while a story frame is like a zoom lens that captures a specific scene within the landscape (for more on story frames check out **ASSUME YOUR POSITION: STORYTELLING, P. 74**). A frame can be evoked by a simple phrase, such as “driving while black” or “a living wage.” These phrases each capture a →

4 Steps to Big-Picture Framing

- 1. Get to know the principles.** Review the worksheet on **PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE RACIAL JUSTICE FRAMING (P. 29)**.
- 2. Draw on examples.** Use the **SAMPLE FRAMES (P. 32)** sheet to see how these principles apply to four frames for racial justice and youth rights.
- 3. Call out assumptions on your issue.** There are a few assumptions that broadly define “conservative” frames versus “progressive frames”. Use the attached **ASSUMPTIONS: OURS VS. THEIRS CHART (P. 30)** to identify the assumptions you'll want to include and the assumptions you want to confront through your frame.
- 4. Construct your frame.** Now you're ready to get to the heart of framing. It would be nice if there was a 12-step process to constructing the perfect frame, but in reality framing is a non-linear process that requires a series of strategic discussions. Take a look back at the core beliefs, lessons learned from the framing for institutional accountability scenario, your landscape analysis results, and your monitoring results. Use these results to discuss and answer the questions in the accompanying **CONSTRUCT YOUR FRAME (P. 31)** worksheet.

picture of racial discrimination and economic justice, leading audiences to logical solutions: stop racial profiling and support higher minimum wages.

Big picture framing can seem like a complicated process, but the goal of it is simple: to clarify what you believe is important about your issue, so you can clearly communicate why people must take action for change.

HOW YOU SHARE IT

The **CONSTRUCT YOUR FRAME WORKSHEET (P. 31)** is a good tool to use for a group game. Gather a group of around 10 staff, leaders and/or allies (any more would make it difficult to have a deep discussion) and put up butcher papers on the wall – one butcher paper for each box on

the worksheet. Divide up into teams of two or three. Orient participants to the task – they will work in teams to answer the questions in each box, starting with box number 1. The first team to complete the fourth box wins! Report back each team's responses to each box and use these responses to have a group discussion. Ask: where is their alignment? Where is there divergence? How can we deepen the alignment and minimize divergence?

WHAT YOU NEED

- **PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE RACIAL JUSTICE FRAMING, P. 29**
- **ASSUMPTIONS: OURS VS. THEIRS CHART, P. 30**
- **CONSTRUCT YOUR FRAME, P. 31**
- **SAMPLE FRAMES, P. 32**

WORKSHEET

Principles Of Effective Racial Justice Framing

See the **SAMPLE FRAMES (P. 32)** sheet to see these principles applied through four youth rights and racial justice frames.

1. Introduce a new question into the debate.

As progressive and radical organizers we tend to think that making righteous statements will change people's minds. It is much more effective to ask a strategically chosen question that steers audiences toward answers that involve root causes of problems and systemic solutions.

2. Use this new question to expose structural racism.

Ever notice how WHY? Is a common response to injustices that people find morally unacceptable? When it comes to race we can't afford to be silent. We can't afford to hit people over the head with a sledgehammer either, because racism is one of the last explanations the public will accept as the cause of a problem. Try introducing a moral question about racial disparities and audiences will inevitably be led toward answers that expose institutional racism.

3. Appeal to widely-held values.

One common myth about communications work is that we can change people's values if we say the right thing. It's not true; we can't change what people believe about how the world works. But through strategic framing we can show how our issue aligns with their values, and how they should take action to stay true to these values.

4. Show how institutions are responsible for solving the problem.

Make sure your frame holds institutions and not individuals responsible for solving your problem. If you're working on education justice make sure you hold a decision-maker in the school system accountable instead of students or parents. This will lead to policy solutions that create systemic change in your issue.

5. Construct your frame using vivid symbols and phrases.

Frames built on symbols or visuals that people can identify with, and phrases that audiences can quickly understand are extremely effective. When you frame your issue, what do you see? How would you describe what you see in a short phrase?

WORKSHEET

Assumptions: Ours vs. Theirs

WE BELIEVE	THEY BELIEVE
<p>It's The System Poverty and other social problems are systemic, not natural.</p>	<p>It's "Some" People Social problems are the result of lack of initiative and individual failings</p>
<p>We All Deserve Good All human beings are basically connected and deserve the same things. Systems that help us spread "good" fairly don't create laziness but better, more productive communities.</p>	<p>Equality Is Unnatural Equality will only hurt what you have. Equitable resource sharing will mean less for you.</p>
<p>Government Has A Role To Play The public sector government is an effective place to handle social issues and can be more accountable than corporations.</p>	<p>Government Is Bad Government is ineffective and should be run like a business. The best option is to leave as much up to individuals, corporations and/or the market as possible.</p>
<p>Institutional Racism Still Exists The legacy of racism and white supremacy still shapes many institutional policies, rules and regulations, and must be exposed and addressed if we are to achieve justice.</p>	<p>Institutional Racism Is A Thing Of The Past The civil rights struggle is over, and today the main cause of inequality is natural class differences. If racism exists at all, it is just through individual bigotry and ignorance.</p>
<p>We Are Part Of The World Our well-being, safety and quality of life increasingly depends on how the U.S. operates in the world. We can learn valuable things from other countries that can make life better here.</p>	<p>The Us Is Unique/we Belong On Top We have nothing to learn from other nations, their systems won't work here.</p>

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WORKSHEET**Construct Your Frame****1 THEM (OPPONENTS)**
Who are they?

What do they really want (their goals)?

2 US
Who are we?

What do we really want (our goals)?

3 What is the dominant question that opponents use to shape the debate?

What values/assumptions do they appeal to?

Who is responsible or to blame?

What images or symbols do they use to convey what they want?

What key phrases or words do they use to talk about what they want?

4 What is the new question you want to introduce into the debate?

What values/assumptions do you want to appeal to?

Who is responsible for addressing the question?

What image or symbol can you use to convey what you want?

What key phrases or words can you use to talk about what you want?

Sample Racial Justice Frames

JUST CAUSE OAKLAND 2006
Communications Campaign to fight
West Oakland Gentrification

DO BLACK PEOPLE HAVE TO LEAVE FOR THE CITY TO DEVELOP?

Values: cultural preservation, economic and racial justice

Who's Responsible: the Mayor, City Council

Images/Symbols: the West Oakland Train Station, symbol of forced migration

Key Phrases:

- African-Americans are being railroaded out of Oakland
- Predatory development hurts our communities
- West Oakland for the People

COLEMAN ADVOCATES
2006 Budget 4 Families Campaign

WHY DO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES OF COLOR HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO STAY IN SAN FRANCISCO?

Values: family, diversity, fairness, opportunity
 Who's Responsible: The Mayor, Board of Supervisors

Images/Symbols: packed suitcases, red carpet for families at City Hall

Key Phrases:

- Families are struggling to stay,
- SF families stand our ground,
- let's make San Francisco a city of hope and opportunity for all

Sample Youth Rights Frames

OAKLAND KIDS FIRST
Transportation Justice Campaign

WHY SHOULD STUDENTS HAVE TO PAY FOR AN UNFAIR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?

Values: education, mobility, safety, racial justice

Who's Responsible: AC Transit and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Images/Symbols: A broken bus

Key Phrases:

- We need transportation to get our education

ORGANIZE DA BAY
Take Back Our Schools Campaign

WHY ARE OAKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS STILL SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL?

Values: equality, quality education, racial justice

Who's Responsible: Governor Schwarzenegger, the State Superintendent of Public Schools, the state-appointed school administrator

Images/Symbols: mobilization of students to demonstrate student power

Key Phrases:

- Take Back Our Schools,
- will you support student voice or the state takeover?

CHART YOUR COURSE: SECTION 2

Media Planning

WHAT IT IS

Media Planning is the process of identifying why you want to do media work, who you want to reach, how you're going to reach them, and what outcomes you want to achieve. For marginalized communities, media planning must also include identifying obstacles to accessing media and advancing your frame.

You've created a frame that put bound-

aries on your landscape analysis. Now you're going to create a media plan that lays out why you are communicating your frame, to who, and how you'll do it. In media terms, this means setting your media goals and outcomes, identifying media audiences, identifying what these audiences read, watch and listen to, and timelining news opportunities for carrying out your plan. Once you've done your planning, you can identify media-makers to target to help move your plan.

WHAT YOU DO

4 Steps To Media Planning

- 1. Get to know the elements of media planning.** Follow the **MEDIA CAMPAIGN ROAD MAP (P. 35)** below to see the key elements of media planning and how they rollout over the course of an entire media campaign.
- 2. Define the scope of your plan.** The scope of a media campaign can vary from promotion for a single event, to a five-year plan for a long-term organizing campaign. Use the attached **SCOPE ASSESSMENT (P. 36)** to determine the scope of your plan.
- 3. Draw on a sample.** Check out the **SAMPLE MEDIA PLANNING WORKSHEET (P. 42)** to get an idea of how to use the **MEDIA PLANNING WORKSHEET (P. 38)**.
- 4. Create your plan.** If your answers to the scope questions involve a 2 year or longer campaign, you may want to focus on crafting a long-term media strategy (with goals and outcomes, audiences and key news hooks) while creating more detailed media plans in smaller chunks (e.g. every 6 months or each year). Use the guidelines to help you fill out the **MEDIA PLANNING WORKSHEET (P. 38)**, and the news hooks for racial justice shet to help you identify news hooks.

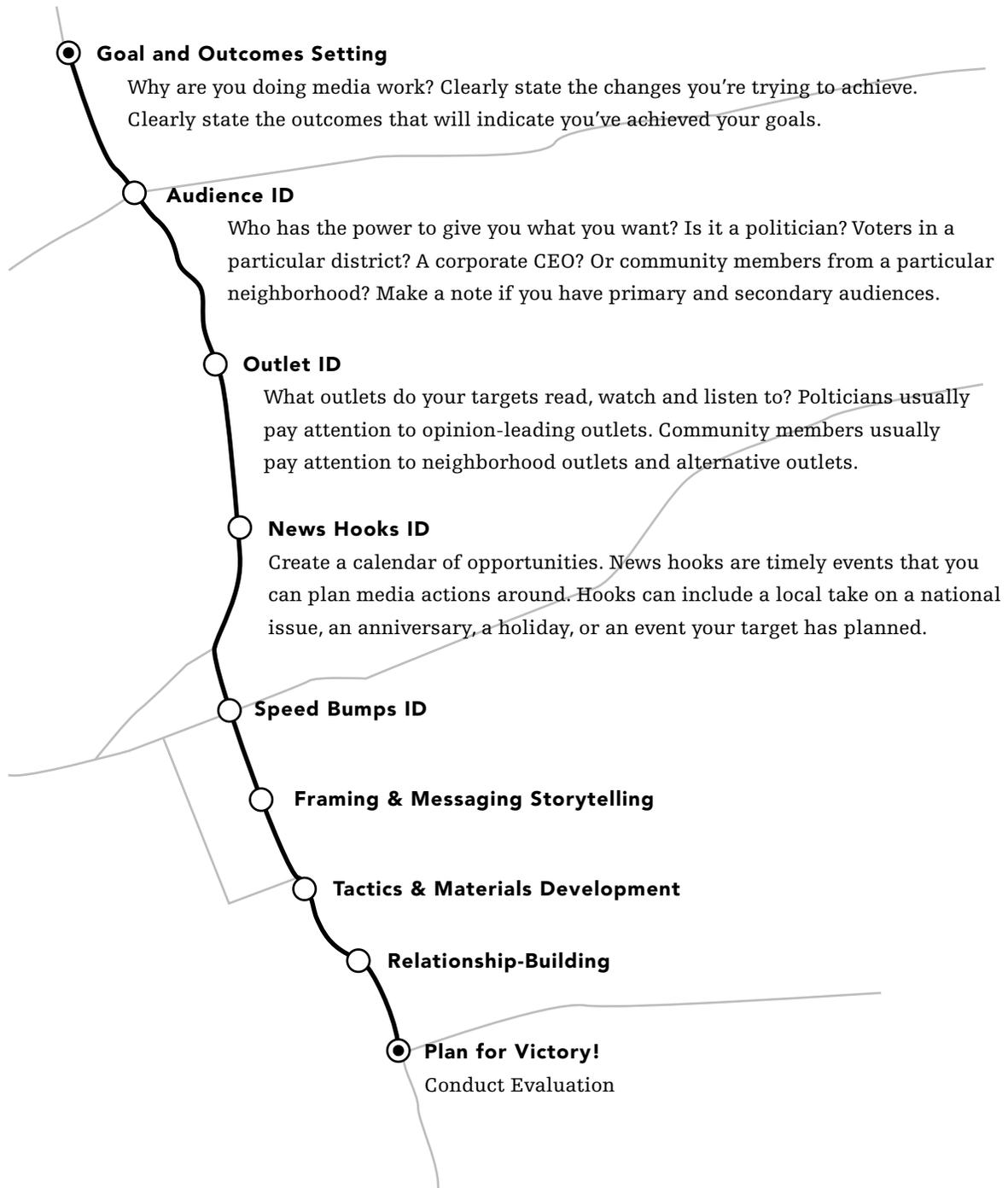


WHAT YOU NEED

- **MEDIA CAMPAIGN ROAD MAP, P. 35**
- **SCOPE ASSESSMENT, P. 36**
- **NEWSHOOKS, P. 37**
- **MEDIA PLANNING WORKSHEET, P. 38**
- **GUIDELINES FOR USING THE
PLANNING WORKSHEET, P. 41**
- **SAMPLE MEDIA PLANNING
WORKSHEET, P. 42**

WORKSHEET

Media Campaign Road Map



WORKSHEET

Scope Assessment for Your Media Campaign

1. How long is your social change project or campaign?

2. How do you want to use communications to achieve your social change goals?

(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- a. To build legitimacy and credibility for your organization, issue or method
- b. To get your issue onto the agenda of public debate
- c. To insert your frames into an existing public debate
- d. To pressure targets
- e. To recruit members or volunteers
- f. To mobilize a constituency
- g. To counter stereotypes and bias

3. How much time will it take to achieve each of the broad goals circled above?

WORKSHEET**News Hooks**

News Hooks	Examples
Holidays Commemorative Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Human Rights Day (Dec 10) • International Migrants’ Day (Dec 18) • International Women’s Day (March 8) • Labor Day • National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality (Oct 22) • Martin Luther King Jr. Day • Chinese New Year • February – Black history and women’s history month • April Fools’ Day (April 1) • Tax Day (April 15)
Anniversaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anniversary of Roe v. Wade (Jan 22) • Creation of juvenile justice system (first juvenile court created 1899) • Voting Rights Act (August 6, 1965)
Seasonal Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to School • End of School • Spring Break
Political Events Historic Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential Election • Mayoral Elections • Governor Elections • State Budget released or approved
New Developments Events related to your issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bills in state legislatures • New report releases • City, state and federal budget developments
Stories already in the news Ways to localize a national story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rise in international sex trafficking • Reported job growth in CA & nation • Local, state and national elections • Social Forums

WORKSHEET

Media Planning

Effective media advocacy is an integral part of your organizing campaign. The worksheet on the next three pages will help you to think strategically about your media plans. The first and most important rule is: Create your media plans before you start your campaign. Identifying your target audience(s) and outlets is just as important as identifying your organizing targets. Get ready for media justice!

GOALS & OUTCOMES

Write your three main organizing goals here:

List three goals for your work with the media:

How will you know you've reached your goals?

List three outcomes that correspond to your media goals:



MEDIA PLANNING CONT.

TARGETS

Whom do you want to reach? Remember any targets you identified.

Organization/ Constituency	Why do we want them?	What do we want them to do?	What do they care about? <small>(VALUES, VULNERABILITIES)</small>	What/whom do they read, watch, listen to?

OUTLETS

What are the best media for conveying this message for each target?

(LIST TARGETS AND CHOOSE ONE OR MORE THAT FIT. TRY TO FOCUS ON NO MORE THAN THREE)

Large Academic Publications	Professional development or journal articles
News media: <input type="checkbox"/> PRINT <input type="checkbox"/> RADIO <input type="checkbox"/> TELEVISION <input type="checkbox"/> ON-LINE <input type="checkbox"/> OPINION	Entertainment media
Other online media	Advertising: <input type="checkbox"/> BILLBOARDS/PUBLIC KIOSKS <input type="checkbox"/> PRINT <input type="checkbox"/> RADIO <input type="checkbox"/> TELEVISION <input type="checkbox"/> ON-LINE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER
Personal networks	Other (LEAFLETS, ETC)



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MEDIA PLANNING CONT.

HOOKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

List upcoming events and products, date they are scheduled to be completed and whether they have any piggybacking opportunities:

Event/Product	Date to be done	News hooks / Media opportunities

List other events and news hooks you know about (annual conferences, anniversaries, etc.) that provide opportunities to communicate with others and advance your goals:

TIMELINING

Organize these events in chronological order and prioritize which are the communications opportunities you'd like to follow up on.

TASKS

Identify what tasks need to be done and by whom in order to complete the follow up:

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GUIDELINES

Using the Media Planning Worksheet

- 1. Set Concrete Goals.** What concrete measurable goals can you set that specify outcomes you want to achieve? Here are two examples:
“To conduct a year-long marketing campaign to promote our services and recruit 20 new members.”
Or “To conduct a three-month electoral media campaign to highlight the racist impacts of measure A, in order to shift voter opinion and defeat the measure in the November elections.”
- 2. Identify Audiences.** Given your goals, who has the power to give you what you want? You may have multiple audiences. You may have a primary audience who is the ultimate decision-maker (i.e., a politician), and a secondary audience who has influence over the ultimate decision-maker (i.e., voters). Get as specific as possible so you can create messages targeted to each audience.
- 3. Identify Media Outlets.** What media outlets do your audiences read, watch and listen to? Politicians usually pay attention to opinion-leading outlets like the Washington Post or the Sacramento Bee. Community members may pay attention to neighborhood newspapers and alternative outlets. Consider a mix of opinion-leading and alternative outlets, as well as a mix of formats including print, radio, web, TV and new technology like blogs and podcasts. Be comprehensive. The list you create in this planning stage will be the foundation for your press list.
- 4. Identify News Hooks.** News hooks are timely happenings that you can plan media actions around, and may include a local take on a national issue, an anniversary, a holiday, or an event your target has planned (like an inauguration). News hooks can be issue-specific. For example, the first day of school or the anniversary of Brown v Board of Education are good hooks for an education justice campaign. Create a calendar of opportunities. You can narrow this list later when you plan specific tactics or events.
- 5. Foresee Obstacles.** What challenges and barriers might prevent you from getting the coverage you want? Is there other big news brewing that could eclipse your news? What stereotypes or bias might keep your story from being told in a fair, balanced and accurate way? Brainstorm potential obstacles and discuss strategies to overcome them.
- 6. Create a Timeline.** Timeline the remaining key components of your media campaign: messaging, storytelling, and news hooks (placeholders for newsworthy media events you might hold). Create a timeline for the messaging and storytelling stage that accounts for deep discussion, monitoring existing news coverage, research, testing, drafting and then refining to create strategic messages and stories. This span of time can be anywhere from three two-hour sessions to a series of regular meetings over many months. It depends on the scope of your campaign and your organizational capacity.

Sample Media Planning Worksheet: Oakland Kids First

Effective media advocacy is an integral part of your organizing campaign. The worksheet on the next 3 pages will help you to think strategically about your media plans. The first and most important rule is: Create your media plans before you start your campaign. Identifying your target audience(s) and outlets is just as important as identifying your organizing targets. Get ready for media justice!

GOALS & OUTCOMES

Write your main three organizing goals here:

To get AC Transit to guarantee a free or \$10 bus pass for low-income youth

To pressure the MTC to allocate more resources to AC Transit

To pressure AC Transit for improved bus and bus shelter conditions

List three goals for your work with the media.

To show AC Transit that youth rely on affordable bus service to attend after-school programs

To counter the ageist myth that youth are not a significant ridership for AC Transit

To highlight MTC's racial discrimination in resource allocation

How will you know you've reached your goals?

List three outcomes that correspond to your media goals.

Earn coverage with Kids First youth quoted as spokespeople

Earn coverage that spotlights MTC's racial discrimination in resource allocation

Preserve discounted youth passes on AC Transit



SAMPLE MEDIA PLANNING CONT.

TARGETS

Whom do you want to reach? Remember any targets you identified.

Organization/ Constituency	Why do we want them?	What do we want them to do?	What do they care about? <small>(VALUES, VULNERABILITIES)</small>	What/whom do they read, watch, listen to?
<i>AC Transit Officials</i>	<i>They have the power to reprioritize AC Transit spending</i>	<i>Commit to keeping bus passes affordable for low-income youth - 10 or lower</i>	<i>Cutting costs Staying out of the "red"</i>	<i>ANG Newspapers, especially editorials network TV news Major radio news - KGO, KOED, KCBS</i>
<i>MTC Officials</i>	<i>They have the power to allocate resources to Bay Area transit systems</i>	<i>Commit to giving AC Transit as much funding as transit systems in richer areas (e.g. Golden Gate Transit)</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	

OUTLETS

What are the best media for conveying this message for each target?

(LIST TARGETS AND CHOOSE ONE OR MORE THAT FIT. TRY TO FOCUS ON NO MORE THAN THREE)

Large Academic Publications	Professional development or journal articles
News media: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRINT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RADIO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEVISION <input type="checkbox"/> ON-LINE <input type="checkbox"/> OPINION <i>Oakland Tribune, KTVU Channel 2, KRON, NBC Channel 11, KCBS / CBS Channel 5, KGO / ABC Channel 7, KOED</i>	Entertainment media
Other online media	Advertising: <input type="checkbox"/> BILLBOARDS/PUBLIC KIOSKS <input type="checkbox"/> PRINT <input type="checkbox"/> RADIO <input type="checkbox"/> TELEVISION <input type="checkbox"/> ON-LINE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER
Personal networks	Other (LEAFLETS, ETC)



SAMPLE MEDIA PLANNING CONT.

HOOKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

List upcoming events and products, date they are scheduled to be completed and whether they have any piggybacking opportunities:

Event/Product	Date to be done	News hooks / Media opportunities
<i>Rider Surveys</i>		<i>release our results</i>
<i>May 18th Public Hearing</i>		<i>report release and youth rally</i>
<i>June 1st Decision</i>		<i>claim victory or turn up the heat</i>

List other events and news hooks you know about (annual conferences, anniversaries, etc.) that provide opportunities to communicate with others and advance your goals:

--	--	--	--	--

TIMELINING

Organize these events in chronological order and prioritize which are the communications opportunities you'd like to follow up on.

- 4/25 - 5/3 *Julie* *Materials development:
Media Advisory for May 18
Fact Sheet or Newsletter
Spokesperson bios & contact info for youth and parents*
- 4/30 *Julie* *Transpo Justice Coalition - Messaging*
- 4/30 *Jen + Kids First Organizers - Creative Action Training*
- 5/2 *Jen* *Updated press list*
- 5/4 *Julie* *Fax and email media advisory to press list
Pitch calls to reporters immediately afterward*
- 5/11 *Julie* *Fax and email media advisory to press list again*
- 5/16 *Julie* *yep one more time fax and email MA to press list*
- 5/17 *Julie* *Pitch calls - call till you get an answer from every single person on the list*
- 5/18 *Jen* *media Sign in*
- 5/19 *Julie + Jen - Media coverage tracking*
- Wk of 5/23* *Julie* *Debrief and evaluation*
- Wk of 5/23* *Jen* *Editorial meeting with ANG newspapers*
- 6/1 *Julie* *rally? calls to media*
- 6/2 *Julie* *press release about decision*
- next weeks* *Julie* *Evaluation/next steps*

CHART YOUR COURSE: SECTION 3

Press Lists

WHAT IT IS

For marginalized communities, creating a targeted **press list** is like having a compass to guide you on your trip. You could have the tightest media plan in the history of your issue, but if you haven't identified what reporters you'll target to help execute your plan, you could end up way off course.

During media planning, you listed outlets that your target audiences read, watch and listen to. Now it's your job to determine who exactly at that outlet is responsible for assigning and reporting on your issue.

As you build and maintain a press list, it's a good idea to keep notes on **editors** and **reporters**. What have they done on this issue in the past? Do you have a previous history with them and what was that like? Given this, how will you approach them now? Taking notes like this transforms your press list into a strategic guide for building relationships with reporters (see **ENTER THE DEBATE: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, P. 124**).

It may seem like a daunting task to maintain an updated press list, but with the

right tools and consistent media monitoring, you can keep an A-list of the media-makers you need to help turn your media plan into reality.

WHAT YOU DO

SEE NEXT PAGE

HOW YOU SHARE IT

Log on to the [Echo Movement Press Database!](#)* This database takes the isolation out of press list building and press release writing. Using this database, you can create press lists from the user-driven databank of more than 3,000 press contacts, and you can share and build off other organization's press lists and press releases.

This collective approach to press lists helps build communications power for our movement!

WHAT YOU NEED

- **PYRAMID OF MEDIA POWER, P. 47**
- **REPORTER TRACKING FORM, P. 48**
- **PRESS LIST TEMPLATE, P. 49**
- **ECHO PRESS DATABASE OVERVIEW, P. 51**



*www.echo.youthmediacouncil.org/home

WHAT YOU DO**6 Steps to Creating Your Press List**

- 1. Start a system.** Use the **PRESS LIST TEMPLATE (P. 49)** in this section to start your press list, or if you're a grassroots group based in California, you can take advantage of the Echo Movement Press Database, where you can build press lists from more than 3,000 contacts and share lists and press releases with other users.
- 2. Create a list of target media outlets.** Refer back to the media outlets outlined in your media plan, and plug them straight into your press list.
- 3. Supplement this list by filling in reporters at each outlet who cover your issue.** Refer back to your media monitoring to identify reporters who consistently cover your issue. Begin your press list by identifying the reporters at each of these outlets that cover your issue. With increasing media consolidation, there are fewer and fewer beat reporters responsible for covering one specific issue. But there are still some, and you can identify trends in what reporters cover even if they aren't officially assigned to a beat.
- 4. Keep track of reporters who call your organization for information or interviews.** Use the **REPORTER TRACKING FORM (P. 48)** to capture reporter's information when they call.
- 5. Monitor outlets or call newsrooms to find out which news directors, editors, producers and reporters are responsible for covering or assigning reporters to cover your issue.** Check out our **PYRAMID OF MEDIA POWER (P. 47)** to get an idea of who's who in different media outlets, and how they relate to each other.
- 6. Treat your press list like a "little black book" of relationships you want to build.** Take the two notes fields at the right of the press list template seriously. Document how you've dealt with the reporter in the past if at all, and document how they've covered your issue in the past. Then jot down notes about how you want to approach the individual now.

WORKSHEET

Pyramid of Media Power



WORKSHEET

Reporter Tracking Form

Use this form to keep track of all reporters who call your organization for information or interviews. You can then add these reporters to your press list with a note about when and why they called.

TODAY'S DATE:

Outlet Name	
Type Of Media (CIRCLE ONE)	TV PRINT RADIO WEB OTHER:
Address	
Media Contact Name	
Position (CIRCLE ONE)	EDITOR REPORTER PRODUCER OTHER:
Phone	
Fax	
Email	
Issue	
What Did The Reporter Request?	
Notes	

WORKSHEET

Press List Template

When creating a press list, you generally want five types of contacts in the list:

1. Reporters/Journalists
2. Editors/Producers
3. News Directors
4. Newsdesks
5. Wire Services

Each of these types serves a specific function in news production (see **CHART YOUR COURSE: GLOSSARY, P. 26**) so it's important to target media makers at all points of production.

OUTLET (TV, PRINT, WEB, RADIO AND WIRE SERVICES)		
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST?	HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THEM NOW?	

OUTLET (TV, PRINT, WEB, RADIO AND WIRE SERVICES)		
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST?	HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THEM NOW?	

OUTLET (TV, PRINT, WEB, RADIO AND WIRE SERVICES)		
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST?	HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THEM NOW?	

PRESS LIST TEMPLATE CONT.

OUTLET (TV, PRINT, WEB, RADIO AND WIRE SERVICES)		
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST?		HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THEM NOW?

OUTLET (TV, PRINT, WEB, RADIO AND WIRE SERVICES)		
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST?		HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THEM NOW?

OUTLET (TV, PRINT, WEB, RADIO AND WIRE SERVICES)		
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST?		HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THEM NOW?

OUTLET (TV, PRINT, WEB, RADIO AND WIRE SERVICES)		
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE ON THIS ISSUE IN THE PAST?		HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THEM NOW?

WORKSHEET

Echo Press Database Overview



IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS IN CALIFORNIA: You can benefit from our online echo press database, with more than 4,000 press contacts in California and key national contacts across the U.S.

The Echo Press Database is a tailored, sophisticated media tool created by and for social justice groups in California. For a fraction of the price of corporate media databases, this online media engine has thousands of media contacts updated regularly by a statewide network of organizing and advocacy groups. It includes key national contacts like CNN and Associated Press, as well as hundreds of contacts for local, youth and ethnic media.

The Echo Press Database is an easy-to-use, on-demand application for tracking your media contacts, building

press lists and networking with like-minded organizers!

Annual subscriptions are sliding scale based on your group's budget size, and range from \$60-\$1500. Whereas other databases charge upwards of \$2000 per year, or offer flat non-profit rates without taking into account your budget size, with Echo you get customized data and a chance to network with peers for less than .1% of your budget – and you're supporting movement infrastructure at the same time!

We do offer "scholarship" subscriptions on an as-needed basis. Call or email for more information, or to sign up now! 510-444-0640 x 333 or email echo@youthmediacouncil.org

Brought to you by Youth Media Council and Media Alliance.

CASE STUDY

Communicating Racial Justice: The Budget 4 Families Campaign

OVERVIEW

The 2000 census was a wake-up call for Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth. The census showed that San Francisco has the smallest child population of any major city in the nation. For an organization with a 30-year history improving the lives of children and youth in San Francisco, this finding was a call to action.

Coleman Advocates decided it was time to apply its citywide political muscle and advocacy power to organizing low-income families of color against gentrification and displacement. As part of a long-term campaign to keep families in San Francisco, Coleman and a coalition of advocacy and service partners crafted a short-term aggressive campaign to win immediate gains for low-income families. The “Budget 4 Families” coalition demanded and won \$10 million dollars for job training and placement in living wage jobs, quality childcare, violence prevention services, and assistance to keep families in affordable housing.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

- COLEMAN CONDUCTED STRATEGIC RESEARCH THAT PUT RACE AT THE CENTER.** Coleman’s first successful step in communicating for racial justice was their report, “Families Struggling to Stay: Why Families Are Leaving San Francisco and What Can be Done.” Through this in-depth report, Coleman framed current conditions as a crisis for low-income families of color. Coleman found:

Compared to the rest of the city, San Francisco’s families are disproportionately low and moderate income, and are people of color. Significant proportions of the city’s families are recent im-



migrants, while many Latino and Asian families have lived in the city for generations. After white families, the second largest group of families are Asian, primarily Chinese. The poorest neighborhoods of the city have the highest concentrations of children, and while African American children have the highest rates of poverty, the greatest number of poor children are Chinese.

- COLEMAN CRAFTED A VISIONARY FRAME.** Coleman asked the YMC to support its →

COMMUNICATING RACIAL JUSTICE CONT.

media strategy development. YMC began by leading Coleman through a strategic discussion about the current problem, current assumptions, and barriers they would face in communicating about this issue. YMC suggested they ground their communications work in a visionary, solutions-based frame. Coleman’s “families stand our ground” frame centered the power of families organizing to transform a city at a crossroads. Decision-makers and media-makers were unable to disagree with such a powerful and unifying vision.

- **COLEMAN POSITIONED FAMILIES OF COLOR AS THE MAJORITY IN OPPOSITION TO A CLEAR PUBLIC TARGET: MAYOR GAVIN NEWSOM.** YMC conducted a series of discussions with Coleman to craft a strategic story that conveyed their frame. While Mayor Gavin Newsom had gained notoriety as a supporter of gay marriage, as a harsh crusader against homelessness, and as a dubious friend of labor by supporting striking hotel workers, he had not done much in his tenure to support poor and low-income communities of color in San Francisco. Coleman told a story of thousands of families of color in the Southeastern neighborhoods of the city, neglected by a Mayor beholden to corporate development interests and his own public image. In doing so, Coleman effectively positioned families of color as unsung heroes in need of support, and piggybacked off the media’s daily attention to “golden boy” Mayor Newsom.
- **COLEMAN DESIGNED POWERFUL BASE-BUILDING MEDIA EVENTS.** Coleman executed two creative tactics that cultivated media leaders, mobilized their base, and pressured decision-makers through creative communications and people power.

The first was a press conference on the steps of city hall to launch their Budget 4 Families platform. The press conference featured remarkable visuals that captured the problem, solution and vision — suitcases resting on the steps of city hall represented families leaving San Francisco, a red carpet leading to the doors of city hall implied the Mayor could “roll out the red carpet” for these same families by investing more money in needed services. The second was a Stand Up for Families rally attended by more than 800 people. The rally featured family-oriented services including games, vendors, booths and speakers. Coleman leaders threatened with displacement delivered moving testimonials on their struggle to stay in S.F. Both these events earned media coverage on every major TV network, the San Francisco Chronicle, and numerous community and ethnic outlets.

- **COLEMAN USED MASS-BASED ADVOCACY TO STRENGTHEN THEIR ‘INSIDER’ GAME.** By this point, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors were already responding to Coleman’s demands. But to seal the deal, Coleman organized a “family sit-in” during the last budget hearing at city hall. More than 150 people packed into the room pressuring the Board of Supervisors to pass Coleman’s proposed \$10 million budget. Coleman director N’Tanya Lee describes the scene:

We did it “family style,” with pizza, juice and games for the kids and a welcoming, bilingual organizing crew for the ethnically diverse crowd. Volunteers got on their knees and played bingo with the kids. It was more like a family-friendly house party than a budget meeting, and low-income families finally felt ownership of their own City Hall. →

COMMUNICATING RACIAL JUSTICE CONT.

**IMPACTS**

Over a short but intense seven months, Coleman and the Budget 4 Families coalition conducted creative media work, and organized 1,000 people to win \$10 million for essential violence prevention, childcare, affordable housing and job training services. And they won.

With vision, effective organizing and a creative com-

munications strategy unafraid to center the problems and power of communities of color, Coleman and their allies won a life-and-death victory for low-income families in SF. Coleman is now preparing to launch a long-term campaign to improve public education and secure more quality affordable housing in San Francisco. They are prioritizing communications by hiring a development and communications director to resource their ongoing struggle for racial justice in San Francisco and beyond.

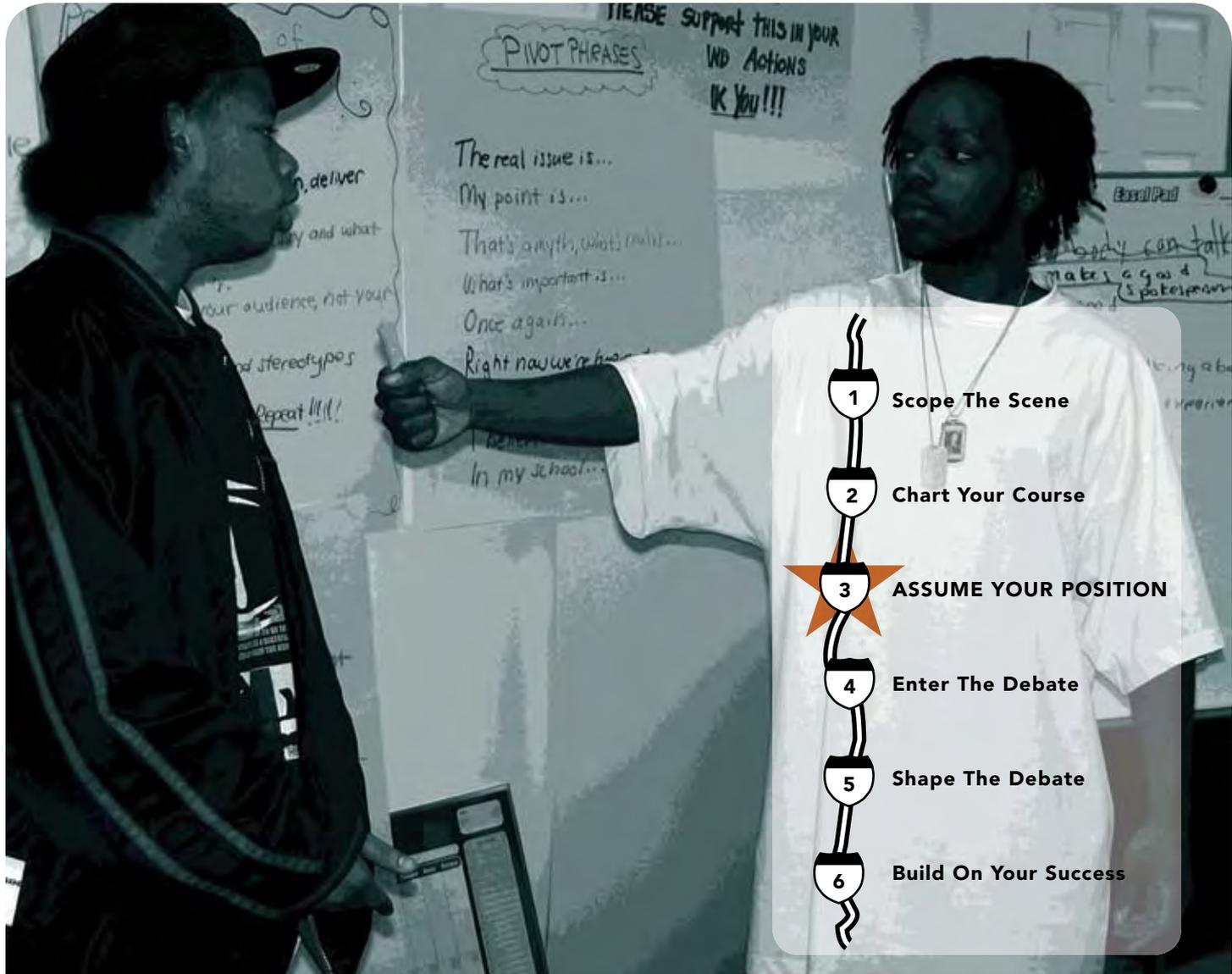
RESOURCES

FRAMING

- *Don't Think of an Elephant* by George Lakoff. Available from Chelsea Green Publishing: www.chelseagreen.com
- Youth Media Council: www.echo.youthmediacouncil.org/home
- Frameworks Institute: www.frameworksinstitute.org
- Real Reason: www.realreason.org
- The Opportunity Agenda: www.theopportunityagenda.org
- The Praxis Project: www.thepraxisproject.org
- *Talking the Walk*, by Hunter Cutting and Makani Themba-Nixon, available through AK Press: www.akpress.org
- The Rockridge Institute: www.rockridgeinstitute.org

MEDIA PLANNING

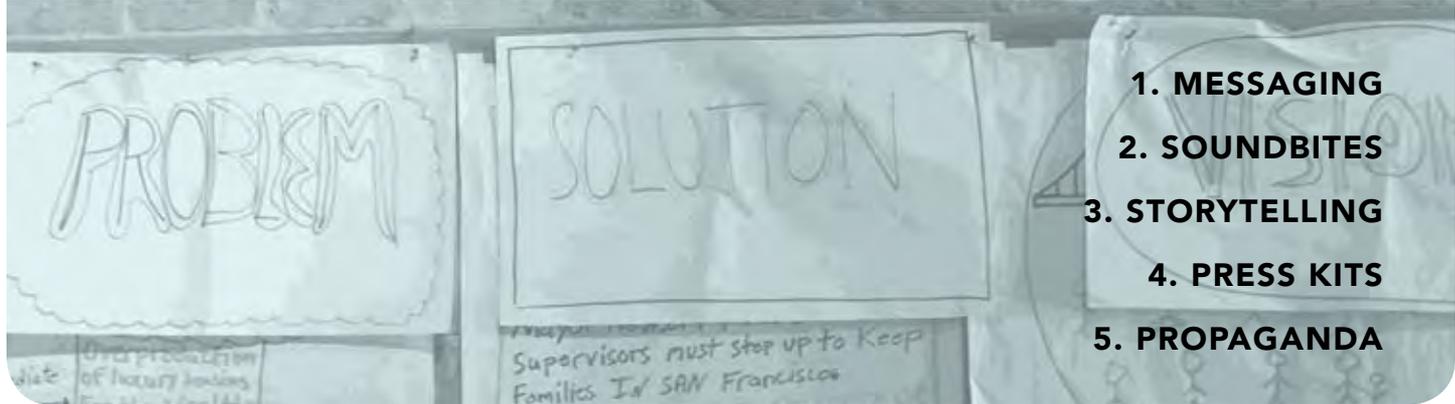
- Core Communications: www.corecommunications.org
- The Spin Project: www.spinproject.org
- Youth Media Council: www.echo.youthmediacouncil.org/home



- 1 Scope The Scene
- 2 Chart Your Course
- 3 ASSUME YOUR POSITION**
- 4 Enter The Debate
- 5 Shape The Debate
- 6 Build On Your Success

3. ASSUME YOUR POSITION

ASSUME YOUR POSITION



1. MESSAGING
2. SOUNDBITES
3. STORYTELLING
4. PRESS KITS
5. PROPAGANDA

SECTION

3

ASSUME YOUR POSITION

THIS ISN'T A SOLO TRIP. IN ORDER TO REACH YOUR DESTINATION, YOU NEED ALLIES, PARTNERS, AND A BASE OF SUPPORTERS.

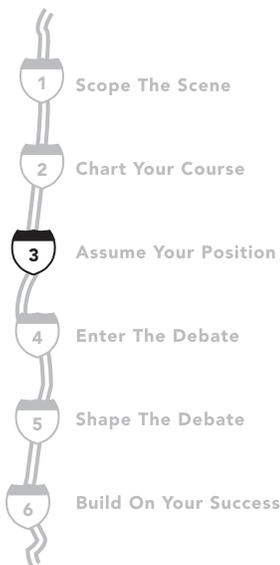
You've charted your course; you know where you're going and how you'll get there; you're prepared with a map, a plan, and the right frame of mind. Now imagine that on this road trip, you're driving a big charter bus. This isn't a solo trip. In order to reach your destination, you need allies, partners, and a base of supporters. Along the way, you'll have to reach out to these groups and convince them to get on the bus. Along the way, you'll also have to reach out to gatekeepers who may put up roadblocks or give you the green light on the way to your destination. Most of these people are hard to reach from the road, so you'll have to project your position clearly so they know who you are, what you're about, and what they need to do to achieve a better community.

Once you have your course and frame charted, you're ready to translate this

broad thinking into sharp messages and stories that answer three strategic questions: 1) Why are you taking this trip (doing this work)? 2) What problem will it address and what solution will it advance? 3) Most importantly, why should people care? Why should they choose to get on the bus or choose to help the bus reach its destination?

By answering these questions in language that speaks to your target audiences, you'll create the raw strategic content you need to move audiences to action. The overviews and tools in this section will help you develop strong messages and stories to effectively communicate a clear position for justice.

Special Thanks to We Interrupt this Message for the foundation of the Elements of an Effective Message tool, to the Movement Strategy Center for their Problem Tree and Vision Circle tools, to the Praxis Project for their Audience Values chart, and to Charlotte Ryan for her Framing for Institutional Accountability tool.



GLOSSARY

Episodic Stories: stories that focus on an individual or group of individuals and one specific activity in which they were involved

Core Message: a message for your campaign or issue that you can tailor to different audiences, and to different media tactics

Media Message: a message is a strategic statement that communicates your position and your call to action. There are three main ingredients to a message: 1) stating the problem in your terms, 2) using shared values to describe what's at stake (or why people should care about the problem), and 3) advancing a solution that tells targets what action they must take to solve the problem.

Media Messaging: the processing of crafting what you will say and how you will say it so your audiences will be moved to action

Morals: in **storytelling**, the lesson to be learned. Morals can also be another word for values (see below).

Shared values: principles or standards that you and your target audiences have in common

Storytelling: the strategic process of crafting a story that will convey your big picture frame and messages through a newsworthy hook, compelling characters, well-researched historical and policy context, and a moral that conveys your solution and vision

Target Audiences: the people or groups of people you need to move to action to reach your goals

Thematic Stories: stories that focus on trends, themes, policy or history and follow individuals or groups of individuals in the context of these larger themes

Values: principles or standards that guide human action

What's At Stake: another way of saying why an issue matters, or what would happen if this problem was not solved

ASSUME YOUR POSITION: SECTION 1

Messaging

WHAT IT IS

The simple equation:

	What's the problem?
+	What should be done?
	What's your vision for change?
—	<u>Why should people care?</u>
	A sound message.

In the simplest terms, **messaging** is crafting what you will say and how you will say it so your audiences will be moved to action. For marginalized communities, messaging also involves confronting stereotypes and offering alternative solutions.

Remember your big-picture frame (See **CHART YOUR COURSE: BIG PICTURE FRAMING, P. 27**)? Your frame put boundaries on your issue so you could focus on a particular position. Your message fills in this focused space so you can communicate your position.

Messaging seems like it should be really easy – just say what you mean. It's a little more complicated than that. Messaging requires you to not just say what you mean, but to say what you need to say to connect with your audiences and inspire them to make change. Tried and tested communications work shows that messaging includes communicating the problem, your solution, your vision for change, and **what's at stake**.

For example, education justice organizers in Oakland, CA used the following message to draw attention to ongoing school inequity: "No Child Left Behind has robbed us of our education. Instead of getting the resources we need to develop our own leadership, we're punished for being poor. On the anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education, we're asking that Mayor Brown create a resolution for noncompliance with the No Child Left Behind Act so that our public schools can provide quality education for all." Once you've created a core message for your campaign, you can use it in your media materials (see **ENTER THE DEBATE, P. 85**), break it down into soundbites for your spokespeople to use in interviews (see **SHAPE THE DEBATE, P. 131**), and inject it into one of the most powerful tactics in communications: the story (see next section **ASSUME YOUR POSITION: STORYTELLING, P. 74**).

HOW YOU SHARE IT

Your messages must be tested, evaluated and refined based on audience reaction and developments in your issue. You can test your messages by conducting focus groups or surveys with audiences, asking your friends, relatives and neighbors what they think, and by evaluating your media coverage. You can keep up with developments in public dialogue on your issue by monitoring coverage. You might do this weekly, monthly or quarterly →

WHAT YOU DO**5 Steps to Effective Messaging**

- 1. Get familiar with the elements.** Messaging is a creative process that requires dedicated time and patience. Take a look at the attached **ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE (P. 62)** worksheet to get familiar with the elements you will need to create a strategic core message.
- 2. Brainstorm your message.** Your messages must be tailored to your target audiences. But before you tailor your message, you must construct a core message that conveys your big picture frame. You can begin by translating your big picture frame into concrete statements by doing a visual brainstorming exercise using the accompanying problem tree, vision circle and solutions frame worksheets. See the **GUIDELINES FOR MESSAGE BRAINSTORMING (P. 63)** sheet, and the **SAMPLE MESSAGES (P. 70)** for a completed brainstorm.
- 3. Draft a core message.** Refer again to the **ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE (P. 62)** worksheet. Apply these elements to the raw ingredients from your brainstorming, and draft a core message using the attached **CORE MESSAGE (P. 71)** worksheet. Remember that an effective message must actively challenge dominant stereotypes in coverage of relevant issues.
- 4. Tailor to your audiences.** An effective message will move your target audiences to action. But you can't move your audiences to action if you don't know what they already believe in and care about. Drawing on your media monitoring research and your personal experience, use the accompanying **AUDIENCE VALUES CHART (P. 72)** to map out your target audiences key beliefs, assumptions and values about this issue. Fill out one chart per target audience.
- 5. Polish your message.** Once you've charted each of your audiences' self-interests, values and beliefs, you're ready to polish your message. Based on your charts, identify stereotyping beliefs or assumptions your audiences hold that you must confront through your message, identify shared assumptions you want to highlight in your message, and pick one shared value you want to appeal to that will convey what's at stake. Then fill out one of the attached **MESSAGE POLISHING (P. 73)** worksheets for each target audience. Check out the attached sample messages to get an idea of what polished effective messages look like.

depending on your organizational capacity and the timeline of your campaign. Ask yourselves: how will you test your messages? Who are a few key representatives of your target audiences that you can get feedback from?

WHAT YOU NEED

- **ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL MESSAGE, P. 62**
- **GUIDELINES FOR MESSAGE BRAINSTORMING, P. 63**
- **MESSAGE BRAINSTORM STEP 1: PROBLEM TREE, P. 64**
- **MESSAGE BRAINSTORM STEP 2: VISION CIRCLE, P. 65**
- **MESSAGE BRAINSTORM STEP 3: SOLUTIONS BOX, P. 66**
- **SAMPLE MESSAGE BRAINSTORM, P. 67**
- **CORE MESSAGE WORKSHEET, P. 70**
- **SAMPLE MESSAGES, P. 71**
- **AUDIENCE VALUES CHART, P. 72**
- **MESSAGE POLISHING WORKSHEET, P. 73**

WORKSHEET

Elements Of A Successful Message

- **Frame for Institutional Responsibility**

Call out your target by highlighting what institution or what official representing an institution is responsible for making change.

- **Speak in Shared Values**

Values are more powerful than facts – figure out what you and your audience both care about, and communicate based on this shared value.

- **Spotlight Racial Justice**

Expose institutional racism and focus on solutions that make the rules more just for people of all races.

- **Evoke Pictures**

Use words that paint pictures your audience can relate to.

- **Be creative**

Use rhymes, sharp phrases, metaphors and comparisons to make your point. For example, comparing an expensive, ineffective public transportation system to a broken down bus shows audiences that the system doesn't work.

- **Focus on solutions**

Advocates spend too much time talking about problems, instead make sure your message clearly communicates solutions your audience can take part in.

- **Keep it simple**

Use clear, reasonable language, especially when communicating for radical policy change.

Adapted from We Interrupt This Message

GUIDELINES

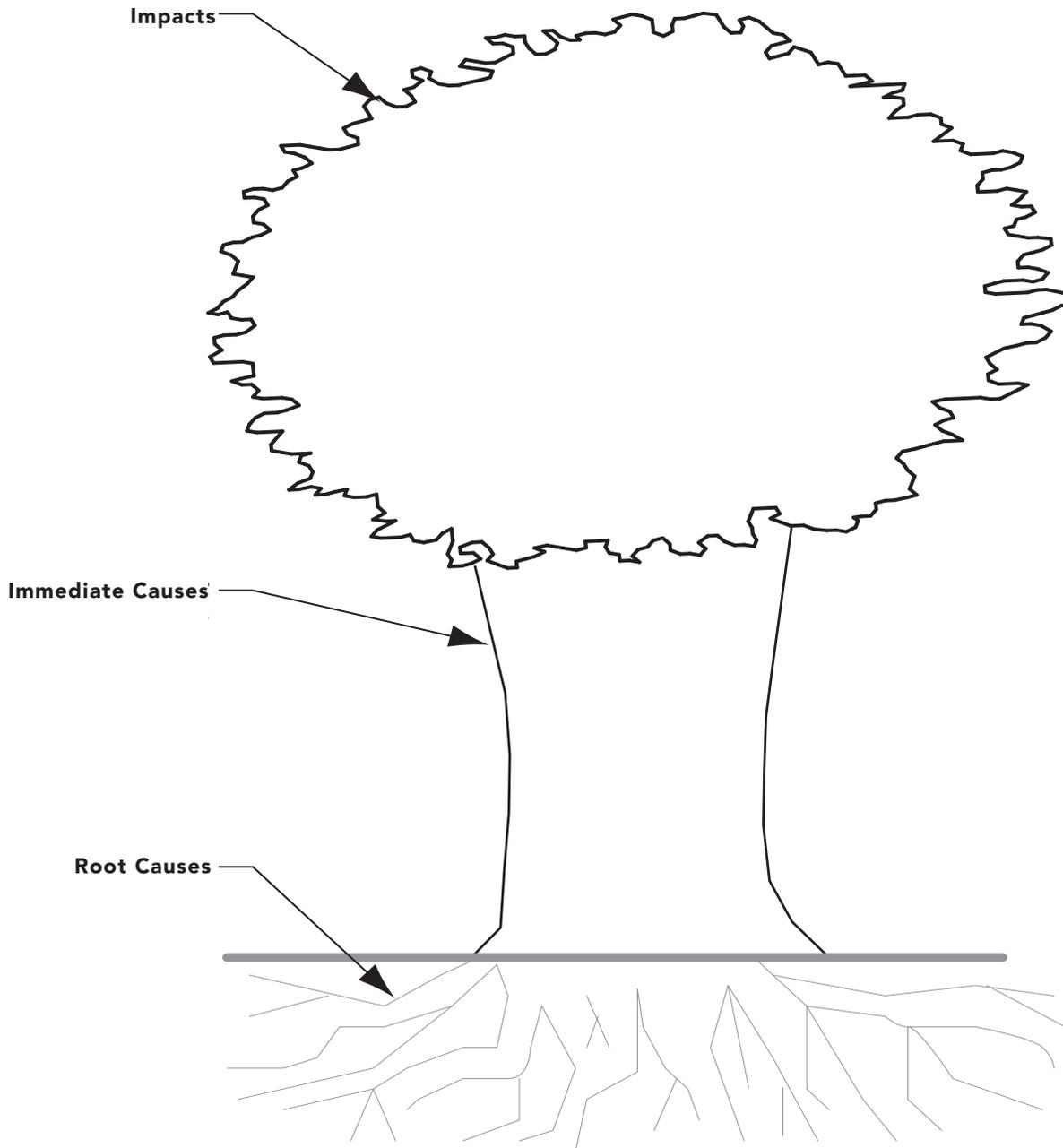
Guidelines For Message Brainstorming

1. Start by stating the problem by labeling the **PROBLEM TREE (P. 64)**. In the leaves of the tree, state the impacts of the problem on your constituency. In the trunk of the tree, state immediate causes of the problem. In the roots, state root causes of the problem.
2. Next, draw your vision in the **VISION CIRCLE (P. 65)**. Draw a picture of what your community will look like once the problems you're addressing are solved. Then write one word to describe your vision.
3. Last, use the **SOLUTIONS BOX (P. 66)** to create statements that convey your solution, who's responsible and why it matters or what's at stake.

Your completed **PROBLEM TREE (P. 64)**, **VISION CIRCLE (P. 65)** and **SOLUTIONS BOX (P. 66)** now hold the raw ingredients for your core message. For a sample, check out **SAMPLE MESSAGE BRAINSTORM (P. 67)**.

WORKSHEET

Message Brainstorm Step 1: The Problem Tree



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WORKSHEET

Message Brainstorm Step 2: The Vision Circle

Draw a picture of what your community will look like once the problems you're addressing are solved.

Write one word to describe your vision.

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WORKSHEET

Message Brainstorm Step 3: The Solutions Box

Our Solution:

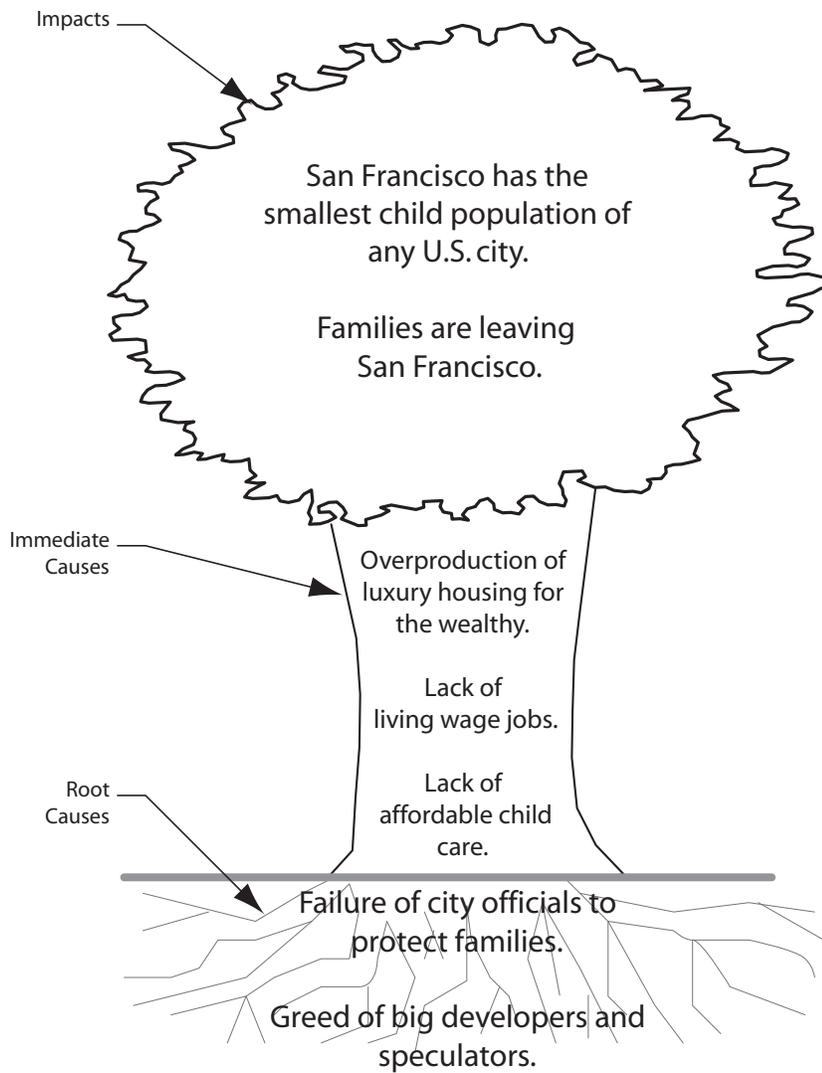
Who's Responsible:

Why It Matters/What's At Stake:

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Coleman's Message Brainstorm to Keep Families in San Francisco

THE PROBLEM TREE



Coleman's Message Brainstorm
to Keep Families in San Francisco

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SAMPLE MESSAGE BRAINSTORM CONT.

THE VISION CIRCLE



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SAMPLE MESSAGE BRAINSTORM CONT.**THE SOLUTIONS BOX**

Our Solution:

We need budget priorities and new policies that create, support and protect affordable housing for working families.

Who's Responsible:

Mayor Newsom and the Board of Supervisors must step up to keep families in San Francisco.

Why It Matters/What's At Stake:

The survival of thousands of families and the quality of life in San Francisco's neighborhood is at stake.

Coleman's Message Brainstorm
to Keep Families in San Francisco

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WORKSHEET

Core Message Worksheet

1. What's the problem? What stereotypes are associated with this problem?

The problem statement or question should be the shortest part of your message. Surveys show that audiences already understand there's a problem, and that organizers spend far too much time elaborating on what's wrong. Instead, inject a catchy statement or question that helps people think about the problem in a different way.

2. What is your concrete solution? What institution or decision-maker is responsible for implementing this solution?

Challenge existing stereotypes by naming an institution or decision-maker who's responsible for fixing the problem, instead of blaming an individual or a marginalized community which too often happens in media coverage.

3. Why does this issue matter? What will happen if the problem is solved?

Emphasize your solution, who's responsible and why it matters. By offering solutions, you convey to your audiences that there is something to be done about the problem, and they can play a role in making the solutions a reality.

Sample Messages

Our young people are not safe on the streets of San Francisco because of escalating violence; they have few places to go now that school is out and budget cuts have eliminated many youth programs. The truth is, we need safe spaces for youth to gather and develop their own leadership skills.

YouthSpace Campaign for Safe Youth Space, San Francisco 2004

Without the \$15 pass it would cost me \$78/month to go to and from school, to my after-school program and part-time job each day. My mom and I simply couldn't afford it. AC Transit has to keep discounted youth passes, or students like me won't be able to get to school or earn a living.

Oakland Kids First Campaign for Transportation Justice 2005

No Child Left Behind has hurt our education. Instead of getting the resources we need to develop our own leadership we're punished for being poor. On the anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education, we're asking that Mayor Brown honor his own Equal School Day by creating a resolution for noncompliance with the No Child Left Behind Act. Until then, equal education for low-income students of color doesn't stand a chance.

Organize Da Bay Take Back Our Schools Day 2005

Will Mayor Newsom stand by while big developers push families out of San Francisco? Or will he stand up for communities of color and working families who call San Francisco home? Now is the time for the Mayor to pass visionary policies that will invest in the livelihoods of families in the Excelsior, Bayview/Hunter's Point, the South of Market and the Mission, to boost the quality of life for all San Francisco residents.

Coleman Advocates Budget 4 Families Campaign 2006

Bush and Gulf contractors used Katrina to lower the floor of working conditions in the region, especially for African American workers and Latino workers - by delaying wages, shelter, and affirmative action. We won't have justice until workers secure their legal right to just compensation.

Katrina Information Network, First Anniversary of Katrina Framing Memo 2006

Why do we look outside our communities for interventions against intimate violence? By engaging with each other we can create alternatives to punishment that heal instead of divide communities. Together, we can find real solutions to end intimate violence.

Creative Interventions, 2005

WORKSHEET

Audience Values Chart

AUDIENCE		
SELF INTEREST What they care about	VALUES Values they hold related to this issue	BELIEFS (helpful or harmful) that affect this issue

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WORKSHEET

Message Polishing Worksheet

1. How can you state the problem with a metaphor, simile or image that speaks to your target audience?
How can you confront stereotypes without restating stereotyping language?

2. How can you convey your solution and vision with a metaphor, simile or image that speaks to your target audience?

3. What action do you want your target audience to take to support your solution?

4. What shared value can you appeal to that conveys why this issue is important? What shared value will communicate to your target audience that this is a high-stakes problem in urgent need of a solution?

ASSUME YOUR POSITION: SECTION 2

Storytelling

WHAT IT IS

Okay, so you've created a tight message. What do you do with it? One thing you can do is inject your core message into a story. This story becomes a guide for how you talk about your campaign or your issue, and can be the basis for your press releases, media events, and pitching to reporters (see **ENTER THE DEBATE, P. 85**).

We all learn through stories. Think of folk tales and epic legends — like David and Goliath or say, *Star Wars*. Stories like these have mass appeal because they're

about sympathetic characters caught up in conflicts we can all identify with. As audiences, we root for the “good guys” and hope the “bad guys” learn their lesson. These lessons connect to “**morals**” that appeal to widely held values of right and wrong: it's wrong for powerful giants to bully little people; it's wrong to build empire by wiping out entire villages (and planets) or destroy their way of life. Solutions follow from these morals: strategy and smarts can be mightier than size and brawn; forming alliances for the common good is better than authoritarian military rule. →

WHAT YOU DO

3 Steps to Storytelling

- 1. Make sure your story describes what's in your frame.** The trick of storytelling for youth rights and racial justice is to choose compelling characters but to not fall into the trap of telling episodic stories that focus on individuals alone. Instead, we want to tell thematic stories about individuals in the context of the institutions that shape whether we thrive or barely survive. Use the attached **FRAMING FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY (P. 76)** worksheet to see how stories can be framed with very different morals or solutions.
- 2. Draw on an example.** Check out the case study and sample stories at the end of this section (**P. 80**) for an example of effective messaging and storytelling.
- 3. Draft your own story.** Use the guiding questions sheet to help you fill out the **WHAT'S YOUR STORY? (P. 77)** worksheet. Remember to confront bias wherever you can through your story. By interrupting bias, organizers can build credibility, gain access, and begin to reframe issues away from individual blame and toward institutional solutions for systemic problems.

By injecting your message into a well-constructed story, you can pull your audiences into the “drama”, and convey history, political context and institutional solutions through morals that move audiences to action.

HOW YOU SHARE IT

Test your story through role-plays. Practice telling the story to your cousin, sister or mother — anyone who’s not involved with work on your issue. Ask

them what they think the moral of the story is, who they sympathize with and what action they feel moved to take, if any. Revise your story based on their responses.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **FRAMING FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY, P. 76**
- **WHAT’S YOUR STORY?, P. 77**
- **USING THE WHAT’S YOUR STORY WORKSHEET GUIDELINES, P. 80**

WORKSHEET

Framing For Institutional Accountability

1. Rat Bites Infant

An infant left sleeping in his crib was bitten repeatedly by rats while his 16-year-old mother went to cash her welfare check. A neighbor responded to the cries of the infant and brought the child to Central Hospital where he was treated and released in his mother's custody. The mother, Angie Burns of the South End, explained softly, "I was only gone five minutes. I left the door open so my neighbor would hear him if he woke up. I never thought this would happen in the daylight."

2. Rat Bites Infant: Landlord, Tenants Dispute Blame

An eight-month-old South End boy was treated and released from Central Hospital yesterday after being bitten by rats while he was sleeping in his crib. Tenants said that repeated requests for extermination had been ignored by the landlord, Henry Brown. Brown claimed that the problem lay with tenants' improper disposal of garbage. "I spend half my time cleaning up after them. They throw garbage out the window into the back alley and their kids steal the garbage can covers for sliding in snow."

3. Rat Bites Rising in City's "Zone of Death"

Rats bit eight-month-old Michael Burns five times yesterday as he napped in his crib. Burns is the latest victim of a rat epidemic plaguing inner-city neighborhoods labeled the "Zone of Death". Health officials say infant mortality rates in these neighborhoods approach those in many third world countries. A Public Health Department spokesperson explained that federal and state cutbacks forced short-staffing at rat control and housing inspection programs. The result, noted Joaquin Nunez, M.D., a pediatrician at Central Hospital, is a five-fold increase in rat bites. He added, "The irony is that Michael lives within walking distance of some of the world's best medical centers."

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

1. Can our society support welfare babies having babies?
2. Have measures been taken to solve the garbage problem that rats feed on?
3. How can the city maintain public health standards given cutbacks?

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

1. Angie Burns, teen mothers on welfare, a liberal welfare state
2. Landlord and/or the tenants
3. Public health department and health facilities

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

1. Parent education and watchfulness, overhaul of the welfare system
2. Housing court
3. Restoration of public health and housing inspection programs

Source: Prime Time Activism by Charlotte Ryan, reprinted with permission

GUIDELINES

Using The What's Your Story? Worksheet

- **Find your news hook.**

Use the **NEWS HOOKS (P. 37)** worksheet from Chapter 2 and the news hooks you identified through media planning to construct a story around a hook. What anniversaries, holidays or developments in local, national or international news can you hook your story to? For example, if your story is about the need for new legislation to protect against racial profiling, you could hook your story to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, October 22nd National Day of Protest Against Police Brutality, or recent local cases of racial profiling.

- **Set your scene.**

Where is this story taking place? What is new and compelling about this scene? What new developments can you point towards that set the stage for this story being told NOW?

What's interesting about the scene? What's the conflict, new development or unexpected plot? What research can you do to unearth developments that will constitute real news?

- **Identify your main characters.**

Identify people in your community whose personal experiences reinforce your story frame and who are willing to share their story. Often the people most affected by your issue are your most powerful spokespeople. Refine your story frame together, by asking them to tell you their personal stories and adjusting the frame to reflect the reality of their lives.

- **Develop images and symbols to illustrate the story.**

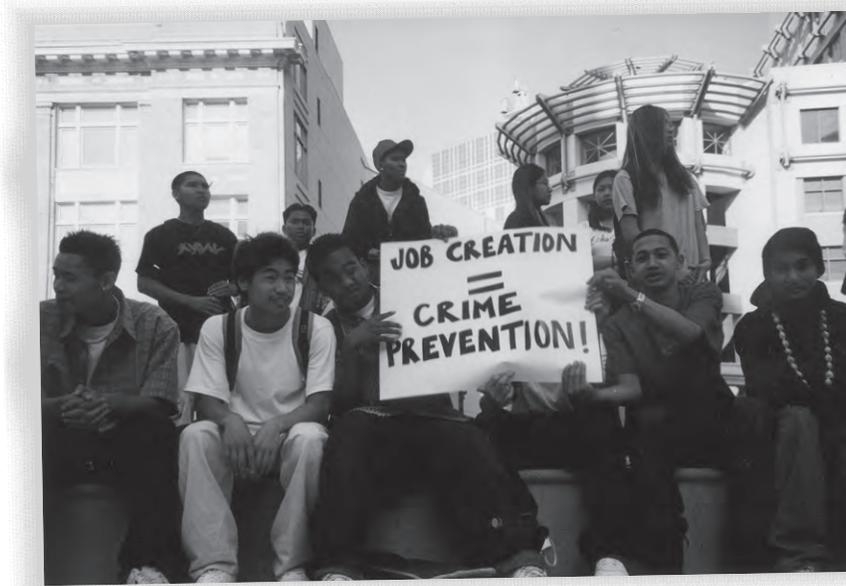
What photos or symbols capture this story in one graphic? Don't think literally, think in metaphors. For example, Little Red Riding Hood's red cape was a symbol of deviance. In social movements, the Black Power fist is a symbol of collective resistance and cultural pride.

- **Detail solutions and identify who's responsible for making them happen.**

Solutions must be concrete, well-researched and actionable to be compelling within a story.

CASE STUDY

Oakland Youth Take a Stand for Real Safety



In 2002, Oakland was hit with a wave of violence. By November there had been 91 murders – a higher murder rate per capita than any big city in California. Mayor Jerry Brown’s “solution” was simple: add 100 new police officers to the Oakland Police Department (OPD). He claimed it was a matter of “simple arithmetic” – the police force was too understaffed to curb crime. But to Oakland residents, this was more than just a numbers game. Their friends, relatives, and neighbors were losing their lives. These residents understood that the violence was due to the rising unemployment rate, underinvestment in violence prevention services, and a lack of safe spaces and development opportunities for youth – not an understaffed police force. Furthermore, there was no evidence to prove that increasing the police force would decrease crime.

When Jerry Brown put his “Measure FF” proposal to add 100 new police officers on the ballot, youth and anti-po-

lice brutality organizations sprang into action. At stake was \$70 million dollars that would go to beefing up a police department already notorious for corruption and brutality, while pennies went to real violence prevention services.

Let’s Get Free (the youth organizing project of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights), People United for a Better Oakland (PUEBLO), and Asian Pacific Islander Youth Promoting Advocacy and Leadership (AYPAL), joined forces to lead the “No on FF” campaign. The coalition fought a fast and furious 3-month electoral battle to defeat FF at the ballot box. Before this coalition began its campaign, the approval rating for Measure FF was at 90 percent. By election day the approval rating dropped to 52%. And though FF technically passed by this narrow margin, the tax measures required to pay for the measure failed. →

OAKLAND YOUTH SAFETY CONT.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. **THE NO ON FF COALITION SET THE STAGE FOR CONTROVERSY.** With YMC leading the No on FF media team, team members crafted a story that put themselves in direct opposition to Mayor Jerry Brown, not just Measure FF. This set up a time-tested story of David vs. Goliath – community members versus an all-powerful mayor. And it turned what otherwise was an uncontested proposal into a juicy political controversy that media outlets scrambled to cover.
2. **THE NO ON FF COALITION TURNED A NUMBERS GAME INTO A STORY OF LIFE VS. DEATH.** Once the stage was set for controversy, the coalition turned Mayor Brown’s “numbers” game into a story of life vs. death. Instead of talking about how many police officers was enough, the coalition injected their own position, asking new questions: why add more police officers to a corrupt police department? Can we afford to take this gamble when real safety is at stake?
3. **YOUTH ORGANIZERS WERE CREDIBLE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.** Youth organizers who understood the real needs of Oakland youth spoke for themselves, and articulated solutions that rang with more truth, credibility and reason than Jerry Brown’s simplistic proposal. They were able to cast themselves as experts, and Mayor Brown as out of touch with the needs of the community.
4. **THE COALITION’S MESSAGES APPEALED TO WIDELY-HELD VALUES.** The core message of

the coalition was clear: FF is ineffective, unfair and unbalanced. FF is a problem, not a solution. Oakland deserves real solutions for real safety, like programs that address poverty, unemployment, recreation, and homelessness. By appealing to widely-held values of fairness, effectiveness, and balance, the No on FF coalition expanded the debate beyond the police department, and beyond Jerry Brown’s claim that corruption was due to “a few bad apples”.

5. **THE COALITION USED WELL-FRAMED FACTS TO APPEAL TO VOTER’S COMMON SENSE.** Again and again, coalition spokespeople delivered this soundbite:

FF would spend 96% of its 70 million dollars on policing and punishment, and only 4% on prevention. Wouldn't you rather spend 70 million dollars improving our schools, ceating more jobs, and providing more recreation opportunities for youth?

They also repeated that there was absolutely no proof that an increase in police leads to a decrease in crime. By repeating these facts, coalition spokespeople appealed to voters’ common sense and successfully portrayed FF as dangerous and ineffective.

IMPACTS

The No on FF coalition succeeded in putting Measure FF into the forefront of public debate. On election day 2002, an article titled “More cops measure heads list of ballot issues” appeared on the front page of the *Oakland Tribune*. By this point, the coalition had been so persistent and effective at advancing →

OAKLAND YOUTH SAFETY CONT.

their position that their messages appeared as background context in news stories:

"Critics put it bluntly: The mayor's plan wastes precious public funds. They also argue that this year's surge in homicides and other violent crimes has more to do with the sagging economy than a shortage of police. To bolster their argument, they point to study after study showing there's little proof that putting more officers on the beat curbs violent crime."

-*The Oakland Tribune* 10/20/02

"Backers say Oakland's police force is understaffed compared to similarly sized cities; opponents say the force needs a good house cleaning before it hires more officers and that the bulk of the money instead should be spent on crime prevention programs."

-*The Oakland Tribune* 11/05/02

Through effective messaging and storytelling, the No on FF coalition reframed Oakland voters' vision of violence prevention and real safety, and sliced public support for the measure by almost 50%.

According to one youth organizer who was a primary spokesperson in the campaign:

Before we decided to organize around FF, people were basically going to vote for it because the language on the ballot was so deceiving. In 2002-03 there was so much violence in Oakland, it was not funny. And when people think, "What's the solution to crime and violence?" a lot of people automatically think "police." Our success was that we changed the way the public thought. We changed people's awareness and attitudes about crime and about what young people need.

RESOURCES

MESSAGING

- *Talking the Walk*, by Hunter Cutting and Makani Themba-Nixon.
Available through AK Press: www.akpress.org
- The Praxis Project: www.thepraxisproject.org
- The SPIN Project: www.thespinproject.org

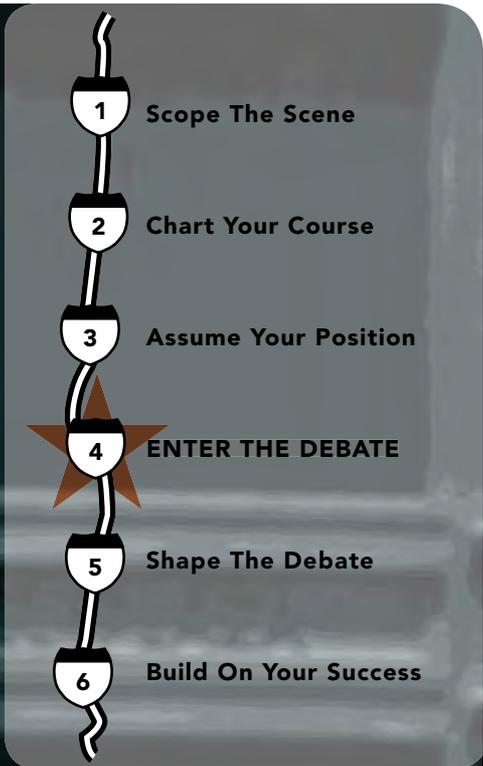
STORYTELLING

- SmartMeme: www.smartmeme.org
- Third World Majority: www.cultureisaweapon.org

PRESS KITS

For sample press kits check out:

- youthmediacouncil.org: <http://youthmediacouncil.org/sections/view/pressroom>
- R.E.A.C.HipHop: <http://www.hiphopliveshere.com>



ENTER THE DEBATE



1. STRATEGIC TACTICS
2. PRESS LISTS
3. MEDIA ADVISORIES & PRESS RELEASES
4. PITCHING
5. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH REPORTERS

SECTION

4

ENTER THE DEBATE

INSTEAD OF DOING A ONE-TIME PRESS CONFERENCE, OR WRITING A ONE-TIME LETTER TO THE EDITOR, YOU'RE POSITIONED TO DESIGN A SERIES OF STRATEGIC STOPS ALONG THE WAY.

You've assumed your position, and figured out who you need to pick up to along the way to your better communi-

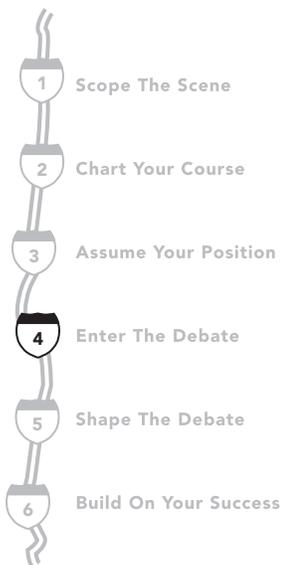
ty. Now you're ready to drive. This is the point at which many of us enter media work – a stage that's often called presswork. But instead of doing a one-time press conference, or writing a one-time letter to the editor, you're positioned to

design a series of strategic stops along the way.

At this stage your task is to start your engine and floor the accelerator. By initiating presswork through **tactics** development, **press list** creation, **pitching** and relationship-building, you will be setting the fire of public debate.

For marginalized communities, entering the debate can be intimidating. We simply don't have the same access to mainstream media decision-makers that more privileged communities take for granted. As people of color, poor people, gender-queer people and members of other marginalized communities, we face pre-conceived judgements: we aren't experts, we're all emotion and no facts, we don't know what we want, and if we do, what we want is impossible to achieve. We also face more subtle bias: that our concerns are too "fringe" to merit coverage, or too "predictable" to be compelling.

These access challenges are ever-present for marginalized communities. But with the power of your base, cultural creativity, persistence, and a strategic approach to building relationships with journalists, you can maneuver through obstacles and gatekeepers and inject your position into public debate.



GLOSSARY

Dek: a newsroom term for the subheadline that appears underneath a headline in print stories. Spelled like this so copy editors won't mistake it for the real word "deck".

Editor: among other things, editors are responsible for assigning stories to reporters. Editors can be the first and last word on what stories get covered, and which get ignored or cut from the final production.

Gatekeepers: people that manage the flow of information. In media outlets, these gatekeepers are reporters, editors, producers, and news directors.

"Insider Strategy": an approach that relies on relationships with decision-makers that allows for direct negotiation with your targets

"Outsider Strategy": an approach that relies on pressure applied to decision-makers through the media, demonstrations, direct action, or third parties

Journalist: generally, the same as reporter, someone responsible for reporting on news

Media Advisory: a one-page announcement that tells reporters the who, what, when, where and why of your media event. Media advisories serve a "save the date" function, and can be sent up to two weeks before your event.

Piggybacking: using an existing news story as a hook to get your story into the news

Pitching: serving up a newsworthy story idea to reporters or editors to persuade them to pursue your story or come to a media event

Pitch Rap: a short script to guide your pitching

Press List: a targeted list of reporters, editors and producers at outlets that reach your target audiences

Press Kit: a packet of information that conveys to journalists who you are, what you do, why your work or campaign is important, and includes the background research, visuals, photos and spokesperson contact information necessary for a journalist to fully represent your perspective on an issue.

Propaganda: materials designed to convey a political message and persuade audiences to support a specific cause

Press Release: a one to two page statement that frames your story, includes your messages in quotes and hooks reporters into covering your news. Press releases can be sent immediately when breaking news occurs, up to one week before a →

media event, or can be saved for distribution at your media event.

PR: public relations. The management of communication between an organization and its audiences

Reporter: generally, the same as journalist, someone responsible for covering news

Newsdesk: the main phone and fax line for the newsroom at a media outlet.
If you're not sure exactly which reporter to pitch to, you can send a press release or media advisory to the newsdesk.

Newsworthy: just what it sounds like: worthy of making the news. For something to be newsworthy, it must be really NEW and this new development must have importance and impact on a large number of people.

Presswork: the technical work it takes to deliver your story to media makers, get their attention, and earn media coverage. This includes creating press releases, pitching, and tracking coverage.

Tactic: a specific activity or method that leads to a larger goal

ENTER THE DEBATE: SECTION 1

Press Kits

WHAT IT IS

Once you've developed your frame, message and the core story you're trying to convey, you're ready to develop a press kit. Press kits can be created to promote the mission and programs of your organization, or to advance the goals of a specific campaign.

No matter who your campaign target audiences are, remember that the target audience for your press kit is journalists. Your press kit should contain everything a journalist would need to tell a substantive story on your issue that includes

your frame, your message, and at least one of your spokespeople as a source.

For marginalized communities, a sophisticated press-kit is a must for developing credibility and influence with journalists. It's worthwhile to take the time necessary to fact check your press kit materials, design them, and package them well. Your press kit is packaging for your position – it should include everything a journalist would need to tell your version of the story.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **CREATING A PRESS KIT, P. 90**



WHAT YOU DO

1. **Develop a core press kit** that you can use throughout your campaign as soon as you've finished messaging and storytelling. Don't wait for breaking news or your first media event!
2. **Update this press kit** with press releases, fact sheets, photos and other materials to address new developments and tactics throughout the course of your campaign (see **CHAPTER 3**).
3. Use the **CREATING A PRESS KIT (P. 90)** worksheet to help you assemble your kit. Here are the basic ingredients of a kit:
 - 2-pocket folder with business card slot
 - **PROPAGANDA** (see **CHAPTER 5**) – like stickers and flyers
 - Press clippings – put your best clippings here!
 - Spokespeople bios – include only information that shows why these spokespeople are experts on your issue
 - Important background research
 - Fact Sheets – fact sheets are an important way to challenge bias. Use well-framed facts that counter myths and stereotypes.
 - Charts and Visuals
 - Photos – a great photo that tells the story of your campaign is key to building credibility. If it's good enough, media makers might even use it in a story.
 - Organizational overview
 - Press Release

WORKSHEET

Creating a Press Kit

A press kit is like a gift you give a journalist. Your press kit should contain everything a journalist would need to write a good story about your issue.

Package your press kit in a double-pocket folder. If you can, get the kind with slits that hold a business card. Customize the press kit folder with your campaign name or organizational name on a label on the front.

Update your press kit periodically throughout your campaign, and biannually for your organization. Arrange the contents of your press kit like this:

Left side of the folder	Right side of the folder
Relevant press clippings (well-framed stories about your campaign or organization)	Current press release
Background research: reports and/or fact sheets on your issue	Quotes or endorsements from leaders and key players
Charts and visuals	Fact Sheets
1-2 good photos of your organization or campaign leaders and actions	Sheet with spokespeople bios and contact information
	Organizational Overview

ENTER THE DEBATE: SECTION 2

Propaganda

WHAT IT IS

Much like press kits are a way to package your position for journalists, propaganda is a way to package your position for your base and potential allies.

Propaganda gets a bad rap. But propaganda is essentially any form of information designed to convey a political message. It's the news media's job to present many points of view and to not give in to presenting one-sided propaganda (though

it often does). It is the job of grassroots organizations to produce creative, influential propaganda that cuts through the white noise of advertising and business and military news, and that communicates the perspective of mass-based organizations through simple soundbites and compelling images.

For the purposes of this toolkit, propaganda refers to creative materials that convey core messages and that are not specific to individual media tactics. →

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Name your campaign.** If you haven't already, generate a campaign name. A campaign name is like a soundbite or slogan that captures the purpose of your entire campaign. Examples are "Take Back Our Schools" and "Unplug Clear Channel" (see **SHAPE THE DEBATE: SOUNDBITES & TALKING POINTS, P. 140**). Test these names out on members of your base to determine which one or two are the most effective.
- 2. Develop your image.** Given your campaign name, use the **DEVELOPING PROPAGANDA IMAGES (P. 93)** sheet to help you develop an image that conveys your message.
- 3. Choose your props.** Once you've agreed on a slogan and image to use in your propaganda, you're ready to choose which specific props will most effectively communicate to your target audiences. Use the **CHOOSING PROPAGANDA MATERIALS (P. 94)** tool to assess your resources and strategy for developing propaganda.
- 4. Create your props.** Producing your propaganda can be time-consuming and costly, or quick and cheap depending on which materials you've chosen, what skill you have in-house, and what production assistance is available in your community. Check out the resources section for printing, silkscreening, and other production resources in the Bay Area of California. You can use this list as a model for researching similar resources in your area.

For instance, propaganda refers to an organizational T-shirt or campaign sticker, as opposed to a fact-sheet created for a particular press conference.

There are lots of different types of propaganda, including T-shirts, hats, bags, stickers, buttons, banners, billboards, stencils for spraypainting, and posters for storefront windows.

Once you've agreed on your core message and story, you're ready to create a campaign symbol and design propaganda to use throughout your campaign.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **DEVELOPING PROPAGANDA IMAGES, P. 93**
- **CHOOSING PROPAGANDA MATERIALS, P. 94**

WORKSHEET

Developing Propaganda Images

What tone do you want to take when speaking to your base and allies? (CIRCLE ONE OR WRITE IN YOUR OWN)

Classy
Angry
Peaceful
Hopeful
Serious
Fun

What colors communicate this tone? (PICK UP TO THREE)

What are images or symbols that communicate your message or soundbite?

(Don't describe entire scenes, keep it to something simple that people can recognize it right away. For example, how can you artistically alter a fist, tree, boat, star, or sun so it communicates your unique message?)

How do these images capture your message? Explain what the image symbolizes.

WORKSHEET

Choosing Propaganda Materials

What is your budget for propaganda production?

Are there any materials you can develop that bear direct significance to your issue? For example, if you're working on a sweatshop-free campus campaign you might choose sweatshop-free T-shirts and sweatshirts as priority propaganda materials. Or, if you're working on a campaign to bring more local artists to corporate airwaves you might choose an independently-produced CD as priority propaganda.

Think about your target audiences – your base. Your allies. Where do they spend most of their time? Riding the bus? At church? At the local park? What types of propaganda materials would reach your audiences in the places they frequent the most?

What in-house skills can you draw on? Do you have leaders, members, or staff who can cut stencils, silkscreen, paint, make music? If so, list these people, their skillset and how much time they're willing to commit to creating propaganda:

Outside of these skills, and based on the answer above, what is your top-three propaganda wish list – dream big! Be creative!

ENTER THE DEBATE: SECTION 3

Strategic Tactics

WHAT IT IS

You've packaged your message into a story and into core materials like your press kit and campaign propaganda. The question remains, how exactly can you move your message and distribute these core materials?

You can move your message and distribute your core materials through strategically-chosen communications tactics. Which tactics you choose depends on a few things. It depends on your organizational capacity (in terms of money, skills and time), on what you're trying to accomplish at specific stages of your campaign, and on your assessment of the types of tactics that will best speak to your target audiences.

Remember that traditional PR tactics don't always work for marginalized communities. We don't have the money to place a 15,000 ad in our local paper or produce expensive glossy materials. And we don't have the credibility to stage press conferences that automatically qualify as news.

But we do have strategy, creativity and people power on our side. So for youth and racial justice organizers, the most important thing to think about when choosing tactics is: at which stages of our campaign will media be most effective and why? What tactics will be best able to support the goals of each phase of our campaign?

WHAT YOU NEED

- **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS, P. 96**

WHAT YOU DO

Use the attached **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS (P. 96)** list to get an overview of the range of communications tactics you can use. Answer the guiding questions on the list to help you determine which tactics will be most effective for your campaign.

WORKSHEET

Strategic Communications Tactics

Choosing tactics is a STRATEGIC process. Which tactics you choose and how successful they turn out to be depends on your answers to the guiding questions at the beginning of each of these sections.

CREATE YOUR OWN CONTENT

- Do you have someone with the writing or production skills to produce these materials?
- Do you have relationships with community papers, radio stations or TV stations where you can place your self-produced story?

Op-Eds

- 650-word opinion essays written by an “expert” or someone directly affected by the issue. Op-eds appear opposite the editorial page in newspapers, and are very influential with policymakers.

Write your own story/Produce your own segment

- Write your own story, include digital pictures, and send it to your neighborhood paper or ethnic community paper with a follow-up phone call.
- Create a radio or TV PSA (public service announcement) to announce an upcoming event or make a statement about your issue with a concrete message about how people can take action.
- Produce a radio or TV segment for your local cable access show, or to send to the local news or talk shows.

STAGE YOUR OWN EVENTS

- Do you have the capacity to do the logistics and planning necessary to pull off a successful event?
- Have you thought of strong hooks, story angles and visuals to make your event newsworthy?
- Can you turn out enough people to the event to show your target that you have power in numbers?

Rally/March

- If you choose to do a rally or action, make sure you have a good news hook for it, and make your messages can be clearly read on signs and banners.
- Also try to stimulate the sense – have music, eye-catching visuals, costumes, symbols.

Action

- Make sure your target is clear and PRESENT at the action. Direct confrontation is always a juicy hook for the media.

Creative Actions

- Send your target a singing telegram with your message!
- Greet your target with a holiday visitor – like the grim reaper for Halloween, a Turkey on thanksgiving, a reminder to get the job done on memorial day, a living wage paycheck on labor day, a surprise gift for Hannukah or Christmas, etc. →

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS CONT.

- Stage a hip-hop battle with emcees, b-boys/girls, turntablists, and have one side represent your target and the other side represent your peeps.
- Turn your message into a prop and stage a rally around the prop. Trying to save your own rent-controlled housing? Create a big wrecking ball out of papier mache and stage a rally to show how demolitions are wrecking our communities!

PIGGYBACK OFF THE NEWS

- Is your issue a hot topic in the news right now?
- Was there a recent development in your issue that you can hook your story to?
- Is your issue already controversial, so that you can sell your op-ed or story as a new take on a conflicted issue?

Op-Eds

- 650-word opinion essays written by an “expert” or someone directly affected by the issue. Op-eds appear opposite the editorial page in newspapers, and are very influential with policymakers.

Write your own story/Produce your own segment

- Write your own story, include digital pictures, and send it to your neighborhood paper or ethnic community paper with a follow-up phone call.
- Create a radio or TV PSA (public service announcement) to announce an upcoming event or make a statement about your issue with a concrete message about how people can take action.
- Produce a radio or TV segment for your local cable access show, or to send to the local news or talk shows.

Letters to the Editor

- 50-word letters stating an opinion on a particular article that appeared in a newspaper THE DAY BEFORE.

Release a press statement

- Similar to a press release, but not necessarily attached to an event. If you’re working on education justice and a big story breaks in the news about education, write up your own statement with your messages hooked to this news, and email and fax it to your press list

Stage a press conference

- Hold a press conference only IF you can make a strong connection between your work and the breaking news, and if you can bring out influential allies to speak in support of youth organizers

ENTER THE DEBATE: SECTION 4**Creative Media Events****WHAT IT IS**

As organizers, holding media events is about much more than getting our message “out”. When we put time and energy into media events, we want to do it our way, on our terms, with not a lot of money. What we don’t have in resources we can make up in strategy and creativity. Media events for youth rights and racial justice campaigns should be designed to build our base, demonstrate our power, confront bias and stereotypes, and get our message “in” to the debate.

Creative media events are a key “outsider” strategy for communities like ours

that are traditionally marginalized from the media. While we might not be able to pick up the phone to get the news editor at the local paper to cover any story we want, we can marshall our people power and creative thinking to put on unique events that are newsworthy and that tell our stories through visuals and action.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **PRESS CONFERENCE DOS AND DON'T'S, P. 101**
- **EXAMPLES OF CREATIVE MEDIA EVENTS, P. 102**
- **NEWSWORTHINESS CHECKLIST, P. 104**
- **MEDIA EVENT PLANNING TOOL, P. 105**



So You Wanna Do A Press Conference? Stop & Read This First.

Contrary to popular belief there is a world of tactics beyond the press conference!! In fact, press conferences fulfill a very specific communications purpose, and should only be used as a tactic when you have important breaking news to share. This could mean an original report release on a newsworthy topic, or an organizational statement on a hot news issue. The point is, for marginalized communities, press conferences are most effective when you “piggyback” off existing news.

Check out the **PRESS CONFERENCE DOS AND DON'TS (P. 101)** sheet for more tips!

When To Do A Press Conference:

The Organize da Bay Coalition, a coalition of education justice groups in the Bay Area, conducted a press conference immediately after a supreme court decision to uphold California's required exit exam for high school seniors. The Press Conference attracted 10 (media outlets and resulted in 5 TV stories, 3 print stories, and 2 web stories. “State politicians are building political careers on the backs of students by pretending to fix the educational system with an exit exam that does nothing to address the school system,” said Wendy Orellana, a student member of ODB. ODB was able to counter the idea that standardized tests are the only way to measure success, and exposed the school system's inequality as the problem with California's exit exams.

When NOT To Do A Press Conference:

Young People for Frisco (not a real group) decided to hold a press conference outside their school to launch their “Speak Out for My Education” campaign to demand more student voice in school district decision-making. They organized a press conference attended by 50 members and allies, with great banners and giant puppets symbolizing powerful larger-than-life students. Only one reporter came to cover the event. Moral of the story – without another hook that's already big news, this kind of press conference won't fly. They woulda been better off doing a campaign launch just for ally and base-building purposes, instead of trying to turn it into a media event.



WHAT YOU DO

1. Make it Newsworthy. The most important step to creating a successful media event is making sure it's newsworthy. There's nothing worse than spending a lot of time and energy on an event where no media outlets show up. So before you go ahead with the logistics of your event, go back to your media plan, make sure the tactic you've designed will take you closer to your goals. Go back to your story and make sure it tells the story you want to tell. Then use the newsworthiness checklist to make sure your event has the ingredients it needs to make the news.

2. Permits and Logistics. If your creative action involves gathering any number of people in a public space, and if it requires amplified sound, then you probably want to get a permit. There may be strategic reasons not to get a permit – for instance, you might be doing a direct action or civil disobedience as part of your strategy to escalate your campaign. There also might be practical reasons to forego a permit – for instance, sound permits might be way too expensive. Whatever you decide, consider how a permit will shape your media story. Will having the legitimacy of a permit help you build credibility through the news? Will gathering unpermitted add a key component of resistance to your story?

Use the accompanying **MEDIA EVENT PLANNING TOOL (P. 105)** to help you plan for overall design of your media event as well as key logistics like permits, ally turnout and visuals.

3. Draw from Examples. The Youth Media Council has worked with many organizations to produce creative media events. We've included three examples of creative media events that have been particularly successful. You'll see from these examples that there's no limit or formula to producing creative media events, and that the best way to learn how to do these events is by example. If you have success stories to share, let us know! Send an email to echo@youthmediacouncil.org.

CHECKLIST**Press Conference Do's And Don't's**

Media experts all agree: press conferences are usually ineffective. If you really do have NEWS and decide to do a press conference, follow these simple do's and don'ts to creating a successful press conference.

DO'S

- ✓ DO have news value (run through the **NEWSWORTHINESS CHECKLIST, P. 104**)
- ✓ DO start on time!!!
- ✓ DO have prepared speakers who can talk about their personal connection to the news
- ✓ DO have creative visuals that carry your message
- ✓ DO have a PA system or "multibox" for reporters to plug their microphones into
- ✓ DO pad the press conference with your own people
- ✓ DO organize a thick crowd to stand behind speakers so your rally looks packed on camera
- ✓ DO feed the cameraman to keep him around
- ✓ DO have press kits available

DON'TS

- ⊗ DON'T take more than 30 minutes
- ⊗ DON'T do press conferences Monday or Friday or any day after 3pm
- ⊗ DON'T do press conferences if you don't have any news

Examples of Creative Media Events



ODB ROLL CALL

In 2004, a coalition of education justice groups called Organize da Bay staged a Take Back our Schools Day Action that turned the tables on public school officials. ODB organizers staged a “roll call” in front of Oakland City Hall to ask the question: “who will attend to our public schools?”. Organizers set up chairs in the city plaza with names of invited officials taped to the chairs. On the day of the event, only three school board members showed up, the rest of the chairs were empty. This created a powerful visual for TV. This creative action sent the powerful message that the Governor, the State Superintendent of Public Schools, and the State Administrator Randolph Ward were failing to work with students to solve key problems in the public school system.

JUST CAUSE OAKLAND STOP GENTRIFICATION BILLBOARD AND NEIGHBORHOOD POSTERING

In 2006, Just Cause Oakland launched a communica-

tions campaign to change the way Oakland residents and public officials talked about development and gentrification. Just Cause used “paid media” to send a strong visual message to their base. Just Cause bought billboard space in a strategic location in West Oakland, visible from public transportation and in front of an empty lot that showed both the potential for community-based growth and the harm of historic disinvestment in the neighborhood. They worked with designers from Tumis, a local progressive design company, to produce a striking billboard that conveyed their frame that gentrification is just the latest form of forced black migration. Just Cause also printed several hundred posters that echoed the imagery of the billboard and introduced their framing of gentrification as predatory development. Just Cause designed their campaign launch event around the unveiling of the billboard and postering in the neighborhood. This tactic framed the billboard and empty lot as the scene of an unfolding struggle against predatory development. They then walked the neighborhood putting up posters, effectively echoing their message throughout West Oakland. →

EXAMPLES OF CREATIVE MEDIA EVENTS CONT.



COMMUNITY COALITION FOR MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY LOCAL ARTIST SHOW

In 2005, the Community Coalition for Media Accountability, made up of the Youth Media Council, Media Alliance, Code Pink, Youth Movement Records and La Peña Cultural Center, staged a creative media event to build their base and demonstrate power to their targets. This tactic was one of two creative actions in their Unplug Clear Channel Campaign, a 2-year campaign to increase Clear Channel's accountability to local radio listeners. To demonstrate the CCMA's vision of what local radio should sound like, and who Clear Channel



should be more accountable to, the CCMA hosted a local artist show on a flatbed truck directly across the street from Clear Channel headquarters. Armed with a sound permit and parking permits for the truck, more than 100 people gathered for two hours for this free concert in the streets. Leaders flyered passersby with information on the campaign, and youth held graffiti-style signs that staked our claim to public airwaves. One activist who attended the rally called it the best action she'd ever been to. This event set the stage for the escalation of the Unplug Clear Channel campaign, which resulted in four legal challenges to deny the renewal of Clear Channel radio stations in the Bay.

WORKSHEET

Newsworthiness Checklist

Is your media event newsworthy? Run through this checklist to find out.

TIMELINESS

- Did you plan your event on a Holiday, anniversary or other notable day that's connected to your issue?
- Is your issue a "hot" issue that's already in the news?
- Is your story about something new?

IMPORTANCE

- Does your event involve confrontation with a decision-maker?
- Will your event have a turnout of more than 100 people?
- Does your event include opinion-leaders in your issue talking about consequences and solutions?
- Does your event have local impact?

AUTHENTICITY

- Will there be people directly affected by your issue available to speak to media?

SAUCINESS

- Is there anything unusual about your event?
- Is your event framed for conflict?
- Do you have meaningful visuals that convey your message and look good in photos or on TV?
- Are you using cultural tactics like poetry, breaking, singing etc. to get your message across?

If you've checked one or more boxes in each section, your event is newsworthy!! If you've checked fewer than this, it's back to the drawing board – try to develop at least one area in each section listed above.

WORKSHEET

Media Event Planning Tool

DATE/TIME:
EVENT NAME:
GOALS OF EVENT:
MAIN TARGET OF EVENT:
HOOKS:
TONE OF EVENT:
VISUALS:
EVENT NARRATIVE (A SHORT DESCRIPTION/STORY ABOUT HOW THE EVENT UNFOLDS, WHAT HAPPENS FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, ETC.):
SPEAKERS:
RAIN PLAN:
ALLY INVOLVEMENT (HOW ARE WE INVOLVING ALLIES, WHAT ARE WE ASKING THEM TO DO?):



MEDIA EVENT PLANNING TOOL CONT.

TURNOUT PLAN

OVERALL TURNOUT COORDINATOR (RESPONSIBLE FOR HOLDING POINT PEOPLE TO THEIR GOALS):
TURNOUT GOALS:
POINT PERSON:
ENDORSERS: POINT PERSON: GENERAL SUPPORTS (ONLINE, ETC.) POINT PERSON:
TOTAL:

BEFORE EVENT: JOBS

	Deadline	Name
Get Permit		
Secure Space		
Buying Props		
Gather Sign-In Stuff		
Make Chant Sheets		
Make Signs / Banner		
Get Sound Equipment		
Reconnaissance		
Make Staff Stickers		
Order Shirts		
Make Media Packets		
Get Media Sign-in stuff		
Outreach/Turn-out/Invitations		
Compile Campaign Literature		
Buy Food		
Do Budget / Check Requests		
Set Program		
Confirm Speakers / Artists		
Do Materials Sign-Out Chart		
Buy Water		
Print Driving Directions		
Do Member Training/Prep		

Created by the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, reprinted with permission



MEDIA EVENT PLANNING TOOL CONT.**DAY OF EVENT: JOBS****Logistical Jobs**

	Name	Notes
Coordinator		
Sign – In Leader		
Documentation		
Chant Leaders		
Shuttle Drivers (or Rides)		
Set-Up/Clean-Up		
Runner		
Volunteer Coordinator		
Money Point Person		
Childcare		
Campaign Table		
Food-servers		
Tech Team (sound, projectors)		
Donations		

Tactical Jobs

	Name	Notes
Tactical Lead		
Police Liaison		
Security Lead		
Media Lead		

Programmatic Jobs

	Name	Notes
MC/Host		
Translation		
Stage Manager		
Speakers/Performers/DJ		



MEDIA EVENT PLANNING TOOL CONT.

Materials To Bring

	Person Responsible
Permit	
Sign In Sheets/Cards	
Pens	
Dots / Stickers	
Clipboards	
Tee Shirts / Buttons	
Banners	
Signage	
Misc Props	
Media Packets	
Media Talking Points	
Media Sign - In	
Campaign Literature	
Money Box / Fanny Pack	
Change	
Stamp / Counter (Front Door)	
Food	
Set List (for show)	
Programs	
Bullhorn / Sound Stuff	
Micstand (press conf)	
Tape	
Chant Sheets	
Nametags	
Staff Shirts or Stickers	
Trash Bags	
Bullhorns	
Butcher Paper	
Camera, Video Camera	
Driving Directions	
Member Prep Materials	

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ENTER THE DEBATE: SECTION 5**Press Releases & Media Advisories****WHAT IT IS**

This may be the number one most frequently asked question in communications work: how do you write a press release? You can use the templates and samples in this subsection to help you write not only an effective press release, but also a simple media advisory.

Press releases are detailed statements on news developments with background and historical context, quotes, and information on your organization or coalition. Media advisories are like “save the date” invitations for newsworthy events, and look something like an outline of your full press release. Media advisories tell reporters the bare bones of who, what, when, and where the event is happening, and why it’s important for the media to cover it.

Media advisories and press releases are most often used by community organizations to announce an event they want media to cover. But they can also be sent to target reporters when there is a signifi-

cant development in your issue that you want to make a statement about.

For example, let’s say your organization is working to increase and improve affordable housing in your city. You learn through an ally inside city hall that a Councilperson is getting ready to introduce an affordable housing bond that would devote millions of city dollars to creating more affordable housing over the next five years. You decide to send a press release to reporters supporting this Councilperson’s vision and framing the dire need for more affordable housing as one of the most pressing problems facing your city.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE, P. 111**
- **SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY, P. 112**
- **PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE, P. 114**
- **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE, P. 115**
- **PRESSWORK TIMELINE, P. 117**
- **COMMUNICATIONS ROLES CHART, P. 118**



WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Create a presswork timeline.** Before you even begin to write a media advisory or press release, create a plan. At least one month before your planned event, make sure you create a detailed presswork timeline with roles. Use the **PRESSWORK TIMELINE (P. 117)** and **COMMUNICATIONS ROLES CHART (P. 118)** to help you out. If you're doing presswork for a media event, prepare materials and your press list at least three weeks in advance. Then two weeks before send out a media advisory to reporters to ask them to save the date and what, when, who where and why. Follow up with "save the date" pitches the next two days (see **PITCHING, P. 119**). One week before, send out a press release and follow up with pitch calls until you actually have a conversation with the reporter.
- 2. Translate your story into a media advisory at least three weeks before your event.** Create a media advisory before a press release. The most important thing to remember is that good media advisory should read like an invitation to a can't-miss event. Use the **MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE (P. 111)** and **SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY (P.112)** to help.
- 3. Craft a full press release at least two weeks before your event.** Remember a good press release should read exactly like the story you'd want to see in the news. Your headline should too; craft a headline that reads like a newspaper header. It should capture what's new and what's significant. Another important thing to remember is that your core message should appear in these materials as quotes attributed to leaders or allies.
- 4. Include photos.** Include high-quality photos with your media advisories and press releases whenever possible. These photos should tell part of the story you describe in your advisory and press release. For marginalized communities, pictures are worth more than a thousand words. Photos have the power to tell our stories in a fraction of the time it would take for reporters to read an entire press release. Because we are often considered objects (people that things happen to) rather than subjects (people who make things happen), photos are key to piquing media-makers interest in the potential of our leaders as subjects, and in the potential of our stories to be stimulating, inspiring and newsworthy.
- 5. Spell check!** In many cases, your media advisories and press releases are the first point of contact with reporters. Your credibility can be made or broken based on the professionalism of these materials. Get a fresh pair of eyes to line edit, use your spell check, and make final changes before sending them out.
- 6. Email and fax advisories and releases.** You can send your media advisory as far as two weeks advance of an event, then send your press release out several days before your event, and then again 24 hours before your event. You should both fax and email it if possible. The more times a reporter or editor receives your press release, the more likely it will penetrate the iron curtain of the corporate press releases pouring in from corporate PR firms every day. Fax press releases to newsroom numbers, and email reporters and editors directly.

WORKSHEET**Media Advisory Template****MEDIA ADVISORY**

For Immediate Release: [Date]

Contact: [Full Name] • [Organization or Coalition] • Work: [Phone Number] • Cell: [Phone Number]

[HEADLINE]

[Dek]

[Photo – optional]

[City]

[1 -2 paragraph overview of event with relevant background information]

What: [A 1-2 sentence description of the event, use catchy language that sells your event as new, different, and important to a broad audience]

When: [Day of the week, date and time]

Where: [Location with address and directions, if necessary]

Who: [List sponsoring organizations, V.I.Ps like politicians and celebrities, and types of people who will be participating, e.g. students and religious leaders]

Why: [1 paragraph description with facts, trends, and the context necessary to show why this event is important]

Visuals: [Describe the scene and props that will make for good photos and TV footage]

[indicates that this is the end of advisory]

Sample Media Advisory

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release: September 7, 2005

Contact: Jen Soriano • Youth Media Council • Work: 510.444.0640 x314 • Cell: 415.225.8318

THE BAY AREA ASKS CLEAR CHANNEL: ARE YOU LISTENING? Local Radio Listeners Challenge Clear Channel's License to Broadcast

[San Francisco] On Friday September 16th, youth, artists, students and community leaders will rally to demand that Clear Channel listen to community members and not just to corporate stockholders. For the first time in eight years, Clear Channel's broadcast license is up for renewal in California. The window for public comment and license challenges began August 1, 2005 and closes November 1, 2005.

Clear Channel owns 1,229 radio stations nationwide, including 11 stations in the Bay Area market (which includes San Jose). Since Clear Channel bought its first Bay Area stations in 1999, it has replaced local hosts with automated content, eliminated station-based community affairs representatives, locked out the majority of local artists, and crushed local venues by monopolizing ownership over the most popular entertainment venues in the Bay. In addition, Clear Channel has consistently used its billboards to influence Bay Area politics, and continues to broadcast racially and sexually biased content despite demonstrated community outrage. The result: Clear Channel grosses millions while listeners pay the price.

"The airwaves are a public resource that should be used to promote local talent and discussion about local issues," says Oakland youth Myriah Sierra. "The Federal Communications Commission entrusts corporations like Clear Channel to use these airwaves for a period of eight years. If at that time these corporations have not fulfilled the public trust, we the public have a right to revoke their license. Their time is up. We want Clear Channel to play fair, or not at all."

WHAT: A march & rally at Clear Channel headquarters to demand local accountability from Senior Vice-President of Programming, Michael Martin.

WHEN: Friday, September 16th, 4-6PM

WHERE: Powell & Market – March begins at 4PM
Clear Channel Headquarters, 340 Townsend – Rally begins at 4:30PM

WHO: A broad coalition including the Youth Media Council, Media Alliance, Acción Latina, Youth Movement Records, East Side Arts Alliance, La Peña Cultural Center, and concerned community members who believe the Bay Area deserves better than cookie-cutter radio. →

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY CONT.

WHY: On September 16, radio stations are required to announce their license renewal during drive-time broadcasts. Since Clear Channel has no mechanisms for receiving community input about their renewal, and no station-based community affairs directors to discuss this input, community members have no choice but to bring their concerns to Clear Channel's doorstep. As of September 16, there will be only six weeks left to file public comment with the FCC to oppose their license. To date, the coalition has collected more than 500 postcards to the FCC from residents who want to see Clear Channel's license revoked.

VISUALS: A "local artist" venue in the street outside of Clear Channel — banners, live art, street performers, 100 youth, workers, community members staging a peaceful rally.

###

WORKSHEET

Press Release Template

[Your organizational logo (optional)]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today's Date

Contact 1: Name Cell Phone Number

Contact 2: Name Cell Phone Number

HEADLINE: A CATCHY STATEMENT ABOUT YOUR NEWS

Dek: Elaborates on Your Headline

Photo – optional

VISUALS: if the release is about a media event, include a description of the scene and props good for photos and TV coverage

PLACE & TIME BRACKET: [City where news is taking place, MONTH, DAY of event]

First Section: YOUR NEWS HOOK — 1-2 sentences on why this event or issue development is important news, timely and impactful for a large number of people. Put the most important information first, as you would see it in a newspaper story.

Second Section: DETAILS & QUOTE — Include 2-3 sentences detailing what's happening, where and when, as well as who's involved and who's impacted by the issue or news. Follow this paragraph with a quote from someone directly involved or affected by the issue or news.

Third Section: BACKGROUND & SPECIAL FEATURES — Add important facts, stats and history that help convey the news story. Include anywhere from 1-3 paragraphs that provide deeper context, and conditions, including who is responsible to change the conditions or what is needed to fix the problem. Add information about special features that make your event/news particularly photoworthy or unique, including key speakers and their organizational affiliations. Try to keep your press release to one-page, two maximum.

Fourth Section: DESCRIBE GROUP OR HOSTS: Close with a description of the organization(s), coalitions or individuals involved.

###

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2005

Contact: Jen Soriano • Youth Media Council • Cell: 415.555.8318

VISUALS: A march through South of Market, a "local artist" venue in the street outside of Clear Channel — banners, live art, street performers, 100 youth, workers, community members staging a peaceful rally.

RADIO LISTENERS CHALLENGE CLEAR CHANNEL'S LICENSE TO BROADCAST

Local artists, youth and families voice concerns about lack of local content and community affairs

[San Francisco] On Friday September 16th, Bay Area radio listeners will stage a local artist rally and speak-out to demand that Clear Channel Radio improve service to local communities. For the first time in eight years, Clear Channel's radio licenses are up for renewal in California. The window for public comment and license challenges began August 1st and closes November 1, 2005. Bay Area listeners are gathering complaints to send to the Federal Communications Commission to demand that Clear Channel standardize local content at 50% and re-instate community affairs directors at each station, or have their licenses revoked.

Clear Channel Radio owns 1,229 stations nationwide, including 11 stations in the Bay Area market (which includes San Jose). Clear Channel bought its first Bay Area stations in 1999, acquiring 106.1 KMEL and WILD 94.9 through a merger with Jacor Communications. Since then, executives like Senior Vice-President Michael Martin have replaced local hosts with automated content, eliminated station-based community affairs directors and locked out the majority of local artists. Currently, there are nine promotions directors but only one community affairs director for all Bay Area stations, while drive-time programs play only 7% local artists on 106.1 KMEL and 2% local artists on WILD 94.9. Clear Channel's aggressive Entertainment division has also crushed local venues like Storyville and the Oakland Box by monopolizing ownership over the most popular entertainment venues in the Bay.

"I think the Bay Area is always creating amazing music, and the biggest change since Clear Channel came to town is that this music is reflected less and less through mainstream radio and venues. More than any other company, Clear Channel is contributing to a rift between community and mainstream culture," says Chris Wiltsee, Founder and Executive Director of Youth Movement Records, a youth-run record company based in Oakland.

In addition to the lack of local content on its airwaves, Bay Area residents are concerned about Clear Channel's deceptive practices. Clear Channel has consistently used its resources to influence Bay Area politics by exploiting loopholes in campaign finance laws. Last year Clear Channel donated \$13,000 to OAKPAC, the Oakland Political Action Committee, for billboards supporting Ignacio de la Fuente's campaign for Oakland Mayor. In 2003, Clear Channel Outdoors donated \$80,000 in billboard space to the "Real Change, Not Spare Change" campaign of the San Francisco Hotel Council in support of Proposition N. Also known as "Care Not Cash," the measure reduced →

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE CONT.

funds for general assistance recipients from \$410 to \$59 per month. As a result of the measure, more than 70 homeless people a month have been sent away from San Francisco with a meal and a one-way bus ticket. Many homeless people, unable to survive in San Francisco, migrated to Oakland and surrounding communities.

These political practices are supported by racially and sexually biased content broadcast on 910AM KNEW, 106.1 KMEL and WILD 94.9. Syndicated talk show host Michael Savage routinely targets people of color and immigrants on his shows, KMEL aired an offensive “Bomb, Bomb, Bomb Iraq” song during Bush’s unilateral first strike against Iraq, and WILD 94.9’s morning show producer was fired from a New York station for creating and airing a racist song about Tsunami victims.

These are among listeners’ growing concerns about Clear Channel in the Bay. Since Clear Channel has no mechanisms for receiving community input about their license renewal, and no station-based community affairs directors to discuss this input, listeners have no choice but to bring their concerns to Clear Channel’s doorstep. As of September 16, there will be only six weeks left to file public comment with the FCC to oppose their license.

This campaign is organized by a broad coalition including the Youth Media Council, Media Alliance, Acción Latina, Youth Movement Records, East Side Arts Alliance, La Peña Cultural Center, and concerned community members who believe the Bay Area deserves better than cookie-cutter radio that harms local diversity. To date, the coalition has collected more than 500 postcards to the FCC from residents who want to see Clear Channel increase local content and re-instate community affairs directors, or have their license revoked.

“The airwaves are a public resource that should be used to promote local talent and discussion about local issues,” says Oakland youth Myriah Sierra. “The Federal Communications Commission entrusts corporations like Clear Channel to use these airwaves for a period of eight years. If at that time these corporations have not fulfilled the public trust, we the public have a right to revoke their license. Their time is up. We want Clear Channel to play fair, or not at all.”

March & Rally to Challenge Clear Channel’s radio licenses
Friday, September 16th, 4-6PM
Powell & Market – March begins at 4PM
Clear Channel Headquarters, 340 Townsend in San Francisco

###

WORKSHEET

Presswork Timeline

3 WEEKS BEFORE MEDIA EVENT

- Draft media advisory
- Update press list
- Create props (signs banners etc), update press kit and propaganda

2 WEEKS BEFORE

- Email and fax media advisory
- Draft press release
- Make Save the Date pitch calls to print and web reporters

1 WEEK BEFORE

- Email and fax press release
- Train spokespeople
- Make Pitch calls to radio and wire services

MORNING OF

- pitch calls to TV
- reminder calls

1 WEEK AFTER MEDIA EVENT

- Track coverage, get original copies
- Email thank yous to reporters
- Conduct evaluation & next steps planning

WORKSHEET

Communications Roles Chart

Roles	Name(s) & Position(s) of Folk(s) Responsible
<p>Communications Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for overseeing the strategic direction and implementation of the communications campaign • Point person to YMC TA provider • Responsible for synthesizing staff media monitoring and other research, and applying implications to campaign • Responsible for content development for communications materials 	
<p>Journalist Liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for developing and maintaining targeted press list • Responsible for relationship-building with journalists • Responsible for setting up interviews with spokespeople • This person can be, but does not have to be an official spokesperson for the campaign (can just connect journalists to spokespeople and provide background information not to be quoted) 	
<p>Spokesperson Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for identifying strategic spokespeople in membership • Responsible for coordinating spokesperson trainings with YMC TA provider • Responsible for spokesperson coaching in between trainings with support from YMC TA provider • Since this is the main role your members will play, the leadership development director should probably be your spokesperson coordinator 	
<p>Materials Guru</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for designing and producing (not writing) communications materials (e.g. press releases, press kits, billboards, flyers, etc.) • Responsible for ensuring the organization has sufficient materials at all times • Usually works in close contact with communications coordinator around content of materials 	
<p>Documentarian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for all aspects of documenting campaign • Responsible for tracking coverage and maintaining files of earned coverage • Responsible for securing people to take photos and video of media events for internal documentation • Usually works closely with Communications Coordinator to document the process of the campaign 	

ENTER THE DEBATE: SECTION 6

Pitching

WHAT IT IS

Press releases alone won't earn you media coverage. But a good press release followed by a strategic pitch will. Pitching is the second step in delivering your story idea to a reporter. Your pitch should be a 30-second rap crafted to convince the reporter you have a hot story item they shouldn't pass up.

Pitching can be intimidating, especially

for those of us who have never talked to a reporter before. There are some reporters and editors who play up the power dynamic between themselves and community members; they may be rude, cold or even antagonistic. But more often than not, reporters will treat your pitch as part of the day-to-day routine of their job. Remember, good stories are reporter's bread and butter. Pitching is a way to serve up this bread and butter. If you have been effective at crafting a →

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Craft an effective pitch rap.** Again, you have about 30 seconds max to catch a reporter's attention. Start with your news, then elaborate on the compelling background of the story. Use the template and sample to help you.
- 2. Practice and deliver your pitch.** When you pitch, make it fast and efficient, but casual and conversational. At all times try to keep opportunities open by asking permission to follow-up — Can I send you more information? Can I check back with you tomorrow or at another time? Is there someone else at your outlet I should talk to? Can I leave you my cell phone number in case you have questions?
- 3. Call until you talk to a live person.** If you get voicemail, leave an initial message with your phone number and a quick description of your story idea. Then call back (but don't leave any more messages) until you reach the reporter or editor so you can introduce yourself and gauge their response to your pitch. You can use the press list template in this toolkit to keep notes on your pitch calls to reporters in your press list.
- 4. Approach pitching with a relationship-building mindset.** If the reporter doesn't do a story for your event this time, keep the door open so that you can keep reporters informed of developments in the future. Remember your role is to be a credible resource to reporters, not to strong-arm them into covering your story.

compelling and newsworthy story, then you can feel confident that you are pitching something that a reporter can use. If you don't feel confident that you have a newsworthy story, take a step back; you might have to beef up your research, sources and newshooks before you're ready to pitch.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **PITCH RAP WORKSHEET, P. 121**
- **SAMPLE PITCH RAP, P. 122**
- **PITCHING DOS AND DON'TS, P. 123**

WORKSHEET

Pitch Rap

Reporters used to “hang out” in the neighborhoods to find good stories. These days, reporters rely more and more on the Internet and on what others bring to their attention. Once you’ve developed your frames, messages and a good story, use this worksheet to prepare to pitch to journalists.

Remember, when you call a journalist to pitch a story, you are *not* asking for a favor. Rather, you are helping reporters do their job, which is to report compelling news.

What is the new development? What is happening?

Who is this story about?

Why is it interesting and important to a broad audience?

Where and when is it going to happen?

What additional information can you provide or refer the reporter to?

CASE STUDY

Sample Pitch Rap

COMMUNITY COALITION FOR MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY, OCTOBER 2005

Hello, are you on deadline?

YES:
Ask when would be a good time to call back

NO:
Jump in...

I'm calling talk to you about a story I thought you might be interested in, because of your track record covering media news. Do you have a minute?

Recently, former education secretary Bill Bennett made news by saying that to reduce crime we could abort black children. This Friday, Bay Area radio listeners are conducting a direct action against his local host station 910am KNEW. Are you familiar with KNEW?

We have gathered about 2000 signatures from Bay Area residents asking the FCC to deny the broadcast license renewal of KNEW and three other Clear Channel stations because of their failure to serve our local interests.

This Friday, concerned community members will stage a Halloween action to deliver these signatures and launch an unprecedented legal challenge to the Federal Communications Commission.

This is a once in a decade opportunity for listeners to have input on what gets played on our local radio stations.

Will you be able to come?

YES OR MAYBE:
Great, please feel free to call if you have any questions.

NO:
*Is there anyone else at your outlet that covers media issues?
Would you like any additional information for a future story?*

###

WORKSHEET

Pitching Do's and Don'ts

Scared of talking to reporters? Don't be! Journalists are workers and regular people like us. But they can be busy, and it's important to be professional and not waste their time (or yours)!

Pitching generally happens in three stages over the course of 1-2 weeks prior to your event or news release. First - Get it on their planning calendars. Second - Follow-up with juicy details, special features and what's unique. Third - Do a hard-sell to convince them to do a story or come out to your event.

DO

- ✓ Ask if they're on deadline
- ✓ Ask when's the best time of day to call
- ✓ Deliver your story in conversational style
- ✓ Sell your story, not just the event or issue
- ✓ Have your facts straight
- ✓ Say "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you" if there's something you don't know
- ✓ Get back to them
- ✓ Say thank you for their time and interest
- ✓ Consider anything you say will be "on the record"

DON'T

- ⊗ Just ask if they can come to the event
- ⊗ Cuss
- ⊗ Get upset if the reporter is rude or impatient
- ⊗ Lie, exaggerate or estimate if you're not sure of the facts
- ⊗ Just SAY the issue is important — you should SHOW this through your story
- ⊗ Expect that the journalist will tell just your side of the story
- ⊗ Say anything you wouldn't want to see in print

ENTER THE DEBATE: SECTION 7**Building Relationships with Reporters****WHAT IT IS**

For organizers, conducting communications work is not just about getting that one-time media hit to raise your organizational profile, it's about cultivating sustained relationships with journalists to shift public debate, influence decision-makers and build power.

Building relationships with reporters is like building relationships with sympathetic targets. Don't expect reporters to

be your friends, but don't assume they are your enemies either.

Building relationships with reporters requires strategy, systems and materials. Follow these steps to building the relationships you need to influence the public debate.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **SAMPLE GOOD AND BAD LETTER TEMPLATES, P. 126**
- **ORGANIZE DA BAY: TAKE BACK OUR SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN, P. 127** →

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Respond to journalists when they cover your issue.** Use the sample letter templates to give journalists positive feedback or constructive criticism.
- 2. Identify key journalists.** Using your press list (see **CHART YOUR COURSE: PRESS LISTS, P. 45**), identify specific reporters who are particularly influential, sympathetic to your viewpoint, or whose stories have generally been accurate and strong. This is your “A” list of journalists to stay in close contact with.
- 3. Access a system for tracking journalists and responding to coverage.** Use the Youth Media Council’s online Echo Press Database to build your own press lists, enter new reporter contacts, and track reporter preferences and behavior. You can also send letters directly to journalists in response to particularly good or bad coverage. If your organization is not in California, see the **RESOURCES (P. 129)** page for other options.
- 4. Create a system for briefing journalists.** The best way to build relationships is to stay in touch with journalists even when you don’t have news. Create a blog, monthly newsletter, a weekly news tip email, or an opportunity-driven issue update to email directly to your target journalists. For examples, see the **ENTER THE DEBATE: RESOURCES (P. 129)** section.
- 5. Develop materials for journalists.** Create an online pressroom and an organizational press kit. You can update the pressroom and press kit quarterly, and announce these updates through email. See <http://echo.youthmediacouncil.org/sections/view/pressroom> for an example.
- 6. Create a plan for reaching journalists.** Identify conferences, public events and journalism mixers where you can introduce yourself to journalists and give them your press kit. Remember, you’re not pitching stories when you do outreach, you’re simply introducing yourself and your organization, and inviting the journalist to learn more about your issue through your materials. The idea is to leave the journalist with a positive impression so they believe you’re a credible source and will call you the next time they write a story on your issue.

WORKSHEET

Sample Good & Bad Letter Templates

Staying in communications with reporters about a job well done, is just as important as letting them know when their article or story wasn't thorough. When a reporter or producer does a particularly good or bad job, let them know. Remember, just as a typo or inaccuracy can damage the effectiveness of your press release, the same can hurt your credibility in building relationships through feedback.

GOOD

For Positive, Accurate and Balanced Coverage of Your Issue

Dear [FILL IN reporter name]:

Thank you for your story [FILL IN the article title or TV/radio story description].

I want to commend you for the balance, accuracy and fairness of your story.

In particular, I appreciate [FILL IN the historical context or accuracy, i.e. your accurate portrayal of our youth/members, your attention to detail, your critical analysis of the problem].

If you don't mind, I'll be sending you periodic updates on developments in our work. In the meantime, please feel free to email or call [FILL IN your direct phone number and email] if you have any questions. We're happy to be one of your community sources.

All the Best,
[FILL IN your name and organization]

BAD

For Inaccurate, Biased or Unbalanced Coverage of Your Issue

Dear [FILL IN reporter name]:

I saw your story [FILL IN the article title or TV/radio story description and the date], and want to thank you for your commitment to issues important to your viewers/readers.

There are a few inaccuracies that I'd like to call your attention to:

- You included [misspelled name], which [should have been spelled _____]
- You quoted me as saying, ["inaccurate quote"], when [I had in fact said _____]
- Your story mentions [inaccurate fact]. [The truth is _____]
- Your story presents [inaccurate representation of your organization or issue]. [I want to clarify that...]
- Your story left out [missing perspectives]. A fair and balanced story [would have included _____]

I hope you'll receive this feedback in the spirit of common pursuit of fairness, accuracy and balance. We look forward to continuing to work with you. Please feel free to email or call [FILL IN your direct phone number and email] if you have any questions. We're happy to be one of your community sources.

Respectfully Yours,
[FILL IN your name and organization]

CASE STUDY

Organize Da Bay: Take Back Our Schools Campaign!

OVERVIEW

Fifty years after *Brown vs. Board of Education* - the Supreme Court case mandating the racial integration of schools, thereby guaranteeing equal education to all regardless of race - youth organizers in the Bay Area, realizing that schools were still separate and unequal, took action. The Organize Da Bay Coalition is comprised of youth organizing groups across the Bay Area fighting for quality education. In 2005, two years after a state takeover of Oakland Unified School District, frustrated parents, students and teachers decided that enough was enough.

"We were experiencing a state of emergency," explains youth organizer Santi Salazar. Eight schools were shut down, OUSD was in more debt than before State Superintendent Jack O'Connell appointed Randy Ward to control Oakland schools. Most importantly, students, teachers and parents watching the quality of education deteriorate had no way to influence local policies or make the necessary changes to ensure quality education. Organize Da Bay, through organizing students, parents and teachers, targeted Randy Ward in their Take Back Our Schools Campaign demanding more local control, more funding for education and an end to school closures and the high school exit exam.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

ODB USED MULTIPLE STRATEGIES TO MEET THEIR CAMPAIGN GOALS.

- In 2000, Youth Together worked with ACLU and Public Advocates to provide student testimony for a state lawsuit on unequal conditions and unequal opportunities. The case was settled in 2004. The



settlement, known as the Williams settlement, allows schools to apply for an emergency fund to fix problems that are hazardous to students' health and impact the quality of education, such as lack of textbooks, mold in classrooms, and unqualified teachers. While the settlement is a huge step in guaranteeing baseline standards of quality education, many students, parents and teachers still do not know how to make complaints and principals are unsure how to access the emergency funds for their school.

- In 2005, ODB sensed frustration was high and was able to channel students', parents' and teachers' anger and confusion productively through collective action. ODB organized a walk-out on May 27, 2005, calling the action "Take Back Our Schools Day." Over 2000 students participated in the walk-out. All major television and newspaper outlets covered the event.

ODB COUNTERED BIAS IN THE MEDIA WITH THEIR OWN PROACTIVE MEDIA STRATEGY USING YOUTH AS SPOKESPEOPLE.

- Before the walk-out, the *Oakland Tribune* printed an article characterizing Oakland youth and →

PRESSWORK CASE STUDY CONT.

ODB activists and rowdy and unhelpful. ODB organizers invited the reporter to ride the bus from Bret Hart Middle School to Life Academy High School on the day of the walk-out. The reporter spent significant time with students to understand how serious they were about changing their school conditions. The next article he wrote was much more objective.

ODB ASKED YMC TO SUPPORT ITS MESSAGE

DEVELOPMENT AND SPOKESPERSON TRAINING.

- The Youth Media Council helped ODB with its message development, developing sound bytes that helped youth spokespeople stay on message. YMC trained youth leaders to understand the goals of media coverage, and to speak to the media. Allowing youth voices to speak for themselves helped to shift adults’ perceptions of Oakland youth as troublemakers, apathetic and disinterested in school.
- Message development and training with youth spokespeople allowed youth to understand and communicate complex issues, like how the federal No Child Left Behind policies punish poor schools in communities of color.
- Every major television station and the Oakland Tribune attended the event. The youth spokespeople were able to deliver a concise and well-thought-out message contributing to their confidence, leadership skills and commitment to the campaign.

ODB CONDUCTED A SERIES OF SMALLER MEDIA EVENTS, SUCH AS PRESS CONFERENCES, TO LEAD UP TO THEIR BIG MEDIA EVENT WITH A

- ODB holds regular media events such as press conferences to lead up to their week of actions to keep visibility high around the issue, increase their legitimacy and maintain their relationships with reporters.
- Due to their consistent presence, reporters regularly ask ODB for comments on a range of issues relating to educational justice. This, in turn, strengthens ODB’s visibility and legitimacy.

IMPACTS

Take Back Our Schools Day was successful in building unity between parents, teachers and students who were frustrated at the state of public education in the Bay Area. The collective action and the ensuing media attention put pressure on Randy Ward to meet with ODB organizers. “For two years before the walkout, Ward did not respond to our request for a youth meeting,” explained Shanice Berry, ODB high school member, “Without our media work, Ward would have continued to ignore us.”

ODB set up a series of meetings with Ward, including two student forums. Through the meetings, ODB was able to negotiate with Ward to sign onto and endorse ‘meaningful student engagement’ policies which would draft new leadership standards and positions for youth and community organizers within the school districts.

Through the media work, ODB was also able to increase the leadership skills, investment and commitment of youth leaders who were filled with new confidence and power. “Even if you don’t win your policies,” Berry said, “getting media attention means that we walk away feeling more powerful.”

Through using a proactive media strategy that centered on youth telling their own stories and building interest in the organization and the issue through smaller media event, ODB was able to use their media strategy to effectively pressure their policy targets and increase the leadership of their members. ODB is prioritizing media in their ongoing work for educational justice. “It’s easier now,” said Santi Salazar, an organizer with Youth Together, “now we know how important it (media) is and what we need to do to get it.”

RESOURCES

PROGRESSIVE P.R. SPECIALISTS

Core Communications: www.corecommunications.org

Environmental Media Services: www.ems.org

Fenton Communications: www.fenton.com

SYSTEMS FOR BRIEFING JOURNALISTS

Community Media Workshop: www.newstips.org

Youth Media Council Echolandia blog: echo.youthmediacouncil.org/blogs

PROPAGANDA PRODUCTION IN THE BAY AREA

Design: Design Action Collective: www.designaction.org

iarte: www.iarte.com

Tumi's: www.tumis.com

PRINTING

Inkworks: www.inkworkspress.org

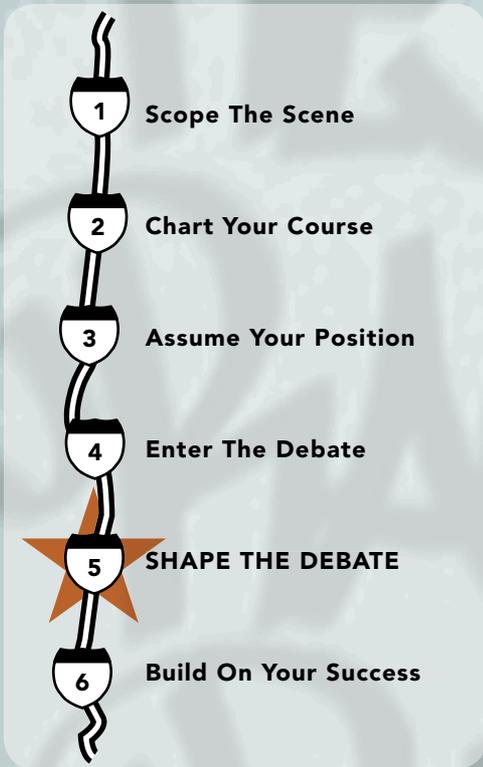
Sequoia: sequoyahgraphics@sbcglobal.net

SILKSCREENING

Native Graphix: www.homeysf.org/native.html

MUSIC PRODUCTION

Youth Movement Records: www.youthmovementrecords.org



SHAPE THE DEBATE



1. MEDIA EVENTS
2. SPOKESPERSON SKILLS
3. TALKING POINTS THAT RESPOND TO BIAS
4. LETTERS AND IMAGES TO THE EDITOR
5. OP-EDS

CHAPTER
5

SHAPE THE DEBATE

By this stage, you're well on the way to your destination. You've followed your course and entered the debate by distributing your materials, pitching your story to reporters, and picking up a few groups of folks on the way. Now you

NOW YOU WANT TO GO FARTHER IN YOUR JOURNEY BY DEEPLY INFLUENCING THE WAY YOUR ISSUE IS COVERED IN THE MEDIA.

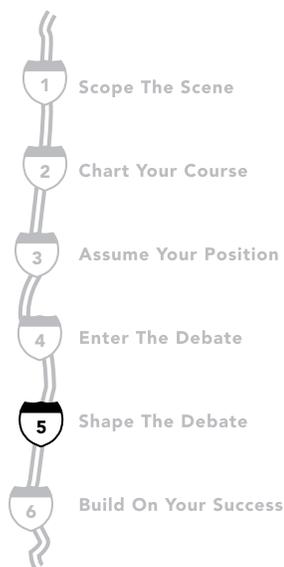
want to go farther in your journey by deeply influencing the way your issue is covered in the media.

This phase of your trip will take you off the highway and onto the backroads. To get to your better community,

you'll have to take a little more time to deepen everything you've already done: Take a good hard look at your monitoring results and use them to refine your frames and messages, sharpen your strategic story, and update your materials. Stocked with this fuel, you're ready to steer your organization or alliance toward becoming a key player in the public debate.

On this trip you'll learn three basic methods for shaping the debate: 1) advancing your story through well-trained spokespeople, 2) confronting bias and advancing your story through letters to the editor, and 3) fleshing out the details of your story through op-eds. By applying these three methods at strategic moments in your campaign you will be advancing your position by developing complexity in the coverage of your issue. This complexity is a level of public debate that all issues deserve, because it allows audiences to make informed decisions that lead to more sound public policies.

Use the overviews and tools in this section to navigate the back-roads of shaping public debate; long-term work in this area can result in shifts in public opinion that will take you leaps and bounds closer to your better community.



GLOSSARY

Letter to the Editor: a short letter sent to the editors of a publication about stories or images that have appeared in the publication. For organizers, a key tactic in shaping the debate.

Defensive Letters to the Editor: letters that confront bias in stories or images that have appeared in the publication

Offensive Letters to the Editor: letters that piggyback off news that has appeared in the publication to advance your position

Media Bias: unbalanced media content that fails to tell a full story

Media Events: public events designed to move messages and stories through target media outlets

Op-ed: 500-800 word essays that express an opinion and get printed opposite the staff-written editorials in a newspaper

Pivot Points: there will be times when reporters may ask questions that may distract you from your message. Pivot points come in handy to flip the way the conversation is going by using transition phrases. This allows you to “pivot” the conversation back to YOUR message

Spokesperson: someone who delivers a message by speaking through the media on behalf of a group of people. An effective spokesperson has a personal connection to the issue, and has the skills and preparation necessary to deliver messages and soundbites that advance campaign goals.

Soundbites: an 8-10 second attention-grabbing quote that delivers the meat of your message using catchy language that rhymes, evokes images, uses metaphors and ends with a solution

Talking Points: scripted responses to dominant stereotypes and/or tough questions a reporter might ask

SHAPE THE DEBATE: SECTION 1

Spokesperson Skills

WHAT IT IS

Sometimes just thinking about speaking to a reporter is enough to make us sweat. A lot of us have had negative experiences with reporters who end up misquoting us, or taking our words out of context. Because of this real history of bias and the real power imbalance between media makers and folks from marginalized communities, we tend to either fidget and act small in interviews, or get aggressive and put on our mental boxing gloves.

But once you get clear on a spokesperson's role, the task doesn't seem so scary. The goal of being a spokesperson is simply to deliver your campaign or organizational

message to target audiences. You don't have to make friends with a reporter, and you don't have to right all past wrongs by getting belligerent with the media. You just have to deliver your message, and thank reporters for their time. By doing so, you'll have taken a huge step toward controlling the debate, instead of letting media makers' agendas control you.

Of course, with longer interviews you need to converse and not just deliver a message or soundbite. Acting as a spokesperson in longer interviews is an art, much like the art of negotiation – your mission as a spokesperson is to be a skilled player in shaping the debate. These tips and exercises will help you accomplish that mission!

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Get familiar with the qualities of an effective spokesperson.** Use the **FRAMEWORK FOR BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE SPOKESPERSON (P. 137)** for tips on how to act like a player in the public debate.
- 2. Know how to control the debate.** Check out the **TOP 6 TIPS FOR CONTROLLING THE DEBATE (P. 136)** to learn how to control the debate.
- 3. Know how to shape the debate in all forms of media.** Use the **INTERVIEW TIPS (P. 138)** to get tips on how to be an effective spokesperson in TV, radio and print interviews.



HOW YOU SHARE IT

1. Pivoting Exercise

What you need: butcher paper, soundbites

What you say: Now we're going to practice what it feels like to stay in control of an interview. Remember, reporters may try to guide us off track to get their story because that's their job. Our job is to (1) stay on message and (2) advance our campaign goals. To do that we always gotta come back to center, meaning, come back to the message. How do we do that? One way is with a tool called pivot phrases.

Butcher paper:

Pivot phrases

The real issue is...

My point is...

That's a myth, what's real is...

What's important is...

Once again...

Right now we're hoping to...

In my experience...

I believe...

In my community/school...

How it works: Have each participant get familiar with the pivot phrases by reading them aloud. Then ask people to add to the list. Divide up into pairs, have one person act as the reporter, and the other as the interviewer. The

reporter should ask any question that comes to mind, the more ridiculous the better. The interviewee then practices their soundbites by using various pivot phrases to stay on message. Switch, then debrief in big group.

2. Rally Exercise with optional video feedback

What you need: soundbites and messages, a microphone or prop for people to use as a microphone, video camera and TV (optional)

What you say: Imagine you're at a rally. Each of you is a spokesperson who will get the chance to speak to a TV interviewer for a short 2 minutes.

Your goal is to deliver the soundbite incorporating the elements of an effective spokesperson, applying the principles of controlling debate, and using your personal pivot phrases to stay on message.

How it works: If you're videotaping, explain that participants should hold feedback until after everyone has had a turn. Then you will review the video and give feedback on each person's performance. If you're not videotaping, tell participants to pay close attention during each interview. After each interview they will give feedback to the spokesperson. (See feedback questions below). Take first volunteer. Keep interviews to 1-2 minutes. After →

each volunteer, have participants clap for support. After each participant has had a turn, play back the video on TV. After each participant ask: What do you remember hearing? What was good about their delivery? What could have been better?

WHAT YOU NEED

- **TOP SIX TIPS FOR CONTROLLING THE DEBATE, P. 136**
- **FRAMEWORK FOR BEING AN EFFECTIVE SPOKESPERSON, P. 137**
- **INTERVIEW TIPS IN DIFFERENT FORMATS, P. 138**

WORKSHEET

Top Six Tips For Controlling The Debate

- **Make sure you are a strategic choice for a spokesperson.**

Are you the right candidate to be a main character in your story? You could be a person directly affected by the issue you're working on, an advocate, or a policy "expert" or professional, like a lawyer, who can provide policy context to reporters.

- **Personalize the message.**

Be able to explain your connection to the issue so you can personalize the message. This establishes your credibility as a spokesperson and makes it more likely that your audience will hear your message.

- **Know what you will say and what you won't say.**

There may be personal details about your own life that reporters will dig into, which are irrelevant to the strategic story you're trying to tell. Be clear about the pieces of personal information that will help you convey your message, and eliminate those that play into existing stereotypes or simply distract from your message. Remember, you don't have to answer every question a reporter poses.

- **Confront lies, stereotypes and bias.**

If a reporter asks questions that raise stereotypes, challenge these stereotypes, don't just ignore them. If you ignore them, the reporter will continue to produce their story based on these stereotypes. Instead say calmly, "Actually, that's a myth" or "That's a common stereotype, but the reality is..." Redirect their questions to bring it back to your message.

- **Repeat, Repeat, Repeat!**

Repeat your message and soundbites by using "pivot phrases" like, "The point is...", "What I'm here to say is...", "In my experience...", or "That's an important question but the real issue is..."

- **Practice, Practice, Practice!**

Role-play in front of a camera, if possible. Then playback the videotape and note whether or not you delivered the message clearly, and if your body language was effective. Use the **FRAMEWORK FOR BEING AN EFFECTIVE SPOKESPERSON (P. 135)**, and the attached interviewing tips in different formats worksheets as guides when practicing.

WORKSHEET**Framework For Being An Effective Spokesperson**

Qualities of a Good Spokesperson	Action Principles
Feel Confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand tall, be open, speak firmly • Believe in yourself – you are an expert and deserve to be heard
Keep It Brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less is more
Be Clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak slowly and articulate each word • If you feel yourself rambling, pause, take a breath and start again
Stay Real	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak on your personal connection to the issue
Have Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice, practice, practice • Stay focused on the message and the goal
Speak Truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick to what you know • Don't say anything you don't know to be true
Be Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inject your message at every opportunity • Take advantage of your right to end an interview at strategic times – e.g. once you've delivered and repeated your message, or if the reporter is threatening and disrespectful toward you

WORKSHEET

Interview Tips in Different Formats

RADIO TALKSHOWS

When interviewing for radio, you're relying on your voice to set the tone and your words to paint visual pictures for your audience. Compared to TV and print, radio talkshows allow you to convey the most information directly to your audience —so be ready to share anecdotes and stories that support your main points.

- **Bring notes.** You can have a sheet of paper in front of you for reference. Keep your notes to one page so you don't have to rustle through papers. Have 3 main points ready to share, along with key facts and notes on anecdotes that will illustrate your main points. Also have your organization's phone number and website written down so you can share this information at the end of the show.
- **Be dramatic.** Speak slower and with more emphasis than normal. Vary your tone and sound excited, passionate and inspiring. A dynamic tone is just as important as strategic soundbites when interviewing on radio.
- **Eliminate distracting noises.** Don't tap your pen or move around too much in your chair. And don't forget to turn off your cell phone!
- **Acknowledge and correct mistakes.** If you're on live radio, correct a mistake or mispronounced word by saying, "I'm sorry I meant to say...." Be lighthearted about it – everyone makes mistakes and your audience will identify with you if you acknowledge a mistake and correct it. If you're on taped radio say, "Can we do that part over again?" then countdown 3-2-1 and start your statement again.
- **Greet and thank hosts.** At the beginning of the show give your host a warm on-air hello and thank you after they introduce you. At the end, thank them again.

TELEVISION NEWS

When interviewing for TV, you're relying on your body language to set the tone and a sharp, strategic soundbite to tell your audience why they should care about your issue and what action they should take. Compared to radio and print, TV news allows you to convey the least information directly to your audience, so be prepared with one point and repeat it a few times.

- **Set the scene.** Guide the cameraperson so that s/he sets up the camera to capture the best scene is behind you. You want banners, visuals and crowds as your backdrop.
- **Focus your gaze.** Look at the reporter, not the camera. Fix your gaze and don't look around. Looking around or looking up to think makes you look shifty and uncomfortable on camera.
- **Be open and confident.** Keep your body language natural, open and strong. Move your hands for emphasis but don't move your shoulders or your head too much. If you're wearing sunglasses or a hat that might cover your eyes, take them off.
- **Wear your message.** Wear a hat, t-shirt, sticker or button that carries your campaign message. →

INTERVIEW TIPS CONT.

- **Control the interview.** Stick to your soundbite and repeat, repeat, repeat. End the interview once you've delivered the message. Remember that interview segments on TV news will be at most 10-15 seconds long. The more you talk, the more likely something you don't want to appear on the news will be aired. Once you've delivered your message a few times say, "Thank you very much," and wait for the cameraperson to stop recording. Once you're off tape you can share more background information if you feel it's necessary.

PRINT NEWS & FEATURES

When interviewing for print you may have to provide background information as well as quotes, so be prepared with resources to refer the reporter to, and provide additional sources to the reporter if necessary. Print reporters may interview you for a long time, but remember that no matter how much you tell them you will get at most 1-2 quotes in the story, so provide background information as necessary, but always come back to your soundbites.

- **Establish the timeline.** Ask the reporter if he or she is on deadline. If they are, stick to your soundbites. If not, you have time to provide some background info to preface your soundbites.
- **Outline the interview.** You can tell the reporter what is background info and what they can quote. You can say, "I'll start with some background then answer any other questions you have." Preface background information with, "So just for background...." Then answer all questions with your soundbites.
- **Don't say anything you don't want to see in print.** Nothing is "off-record." Stick to your soundbites and stories that back up your message and campaign goals.
- **Defer or refer questions you don't know the answer to.** If you don't have an answer to a question but can find it quickly, tell the reporter you'll get back to them immediately with the answer after the interview is over. If you don't have the answer to a question but know someone who does say, "I know someone who can answer that question better," then give the reporter that person's name and contact information. If you don't know, simply say, "I don't have any information on that."
- **Tell reporters about additional sources.** Mention allies and opponents reporters could speak with to fill out their story. Provide contact information if reporters need it. If you don't have someone's information, offer to find it and email it to the reporter. This establishes your credibility and sets you up as a resource for the reporter.
- **Take advantage of email.** Sometimes reporters will offer you the option of responding to questions over email. It's a good idea to take advantage of this opportunity. Responding via email allows you to tightly control your message and minimizes the chances of being misquoted.

SHAPE THE DEBATE: SECTION 2

Soundbites & Talking Points

WHAT IT IS

Soundbites and talking points are key to shaping the debate because good soundbites can convey your entire frame in one short catchy phrase, and good talking points can challenge bias and build your credibility.

Soundbites are simplified versions of your message, scripted so they're easy for spokespeople to repeat, and easy to fit on campaign materials and propaganda. Talking points are scripted responses to dominant stereotypes and tough questions a reporter might bring up in an interview.

There are a few different types of soundbites. The first and most important is the soundbite that frames your campaign. Examples are "Unplug Clear Channel", "Take Back Our Schools", and "Schools Not Jails". Another type of soundbite is the kind that names your events or key publications like reports. Examples are "SF families stand our ground", "Justice Detained" and "For the Love of Radio." Lastly, you'll want to create soundbites that address developments in your campaign. These soundbites should take the meat of your message and update the message to piggyback off news. For example, Governor Schwarzenegger publicly speaks about the need to increase

the prison budget in California. You adjust your "Schools Not Jails" soundbite to become "Governor Schwarzenegger has failed to create more schools, not jails. We need informed leadership decisions to resource our public schools."

Soundbites are useful in shorter interviews, and for the last word in longer interviews. For shorter interviews it's best to simply repeat, repeat, repeat your message and soundbites. The media have the power to edit and will edit you down to one phrase on TV. Speaking in soundbites allows you to limit their power to distort and misrepresent your message.

For longer interviews, you'll need to have more of a conversation. There's a fine line between having a back-and-forth conversation and veering off course and off message. Talking points help you prepare for this back-and-forth, and will allow you to shape the debate in the context of a strategic conversation.

HOW YOU SHARE IT

Soundbites and talking points are best generated through creative exercises. Use the exercises below to develop soundbites and talking points with your media team. You can also use the accompanying sample soundbites and talking points as models. →

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Draw on examples.** Check out the sample soundbites and talking points sheet. Model your soundbites and talking points on these and others that have worked.
- 2. Develop your soundbites and talking points through group process.** Soundbites should be short, sweet and easy to repeat. Use rhyme, metaphor, alliteration and similes when possible. For example, education organizers in Oakland used the following soundbite to support their message: “No Child Left Behind leaves behind poor children and the legacy of Brown vs. Board. It keeps our schools separate and unequal.”

SEE BELOW!

Soundbites Exercises

Exercise I.

'Round the World Brainstorm

Set up 4 butcher papers on separate walls around the room. Each butcher paper should have its own heading: “soundbites that rhyme” “soundbites with similes or metaphors” “soundbites that play on words” “soundbites that paint a picture”. Give each participant a marker. Each participant will choose one butcher paper to start at. They will have 3 minutes at each paper, during this time they should brainstorm as many soundbites as they can and write them on the paper. Facilitator should call time at 3 minutes and tell everyone to switch. Continue until each person has had a turn at all four pieces of paper. Then give everyone 2 minutes to walk around and read what people have wrote. Debrief by discussing which ones people liked most and why.

Exercise II. 5-second PSA

In pairs, participants will get to create a 5-second Public Service Announcement that consists of “Hi my name is _____”, I’m part of _____ (organization) and I’m here to say: (soundbite). Give pairs ten

minutes to brainstorm soundbites with each other, then call time. Ask them to pick a PSA presenter, who will then present their PSA to the whole group. Debrief by discussing which soundbites were effective and why.

Exercise III. Hot Potato

This exercise requires one ball per triad of participants. Triads will face each other. Facilitator will give them 5 minutes to brainstorm soundbites. The object is to think of one as quickly as possible then toss it back to their partner. Participants cannot toss back the ball until they’ve clearly articulated a soundbite. They cannot repeat one that has already been said in their triad. At the end of 5 minutes, whoever is left holding the ball has to report back on the best soundbites from the group. Debrief in large group by discussing which ones they liked best and why.

Talking Points Soapbox Exercise

This exercise requires butcher paper, markers, and a box or chair to stand on. In a big group, ask everyone to brainstorm tough questions reporters might ask about your issue. →

Give them three categories to help their brainstorming: questions that play up stereotypes about us or this issue, questions that dig for scandal, hard questions about our issue. Put these questions up on butcher paper. Divide the group into pairs and have pairs brainstorm answers to the tough questions. Then ask for a volunteer to stand in front of the room. The rest of the participants are reporters who call out questions to the volunteer inter-

viewee. The volunteer answers the questions as best as he or she can, and the facilitator writes up responses that will be useful for the whole group. Take more volunteers. At the end of the exercise, reflect back on the responses and refine them into talking points. You may also need to indicate next steps for research to answer hard questions about your issue that participants were unable to answer through the exercise.

Sample Soundbites & Talking Points

SOUNDBITES

"We need free transportation to get our education!"

–Kids First Youth Bus Pass Campaign 2004

"If we don't get community accountability and equal resources, legalized racism will continue in Oakland public schools."

–Organize Da Bay Take Back Our Schools Campaign, 2004

"Students deserve a clean, healthy environment."

–Youth Making a Change Clean Bathrooms Campaign, 2005

"Enough is Enough - San Francisco families stand our ground!"

–Coleman Advocates Budget for Families Campaign, 2006

TALKING POINTS

"The Metropolitan Transportation Coalition's racial discrimination is putting AC Transit in a stranglehold. AC Transit is forced to feed off its poorest riders to survive by hiking up fares for those who can afford it the least."

–Kids First Youth Bus Pass Campaign 2004

"I'm not leaving school, I'm teaching others how our schools are being hurt by No Child Left Behind, the High School Exit Exam and by the State Takeover of Oakland Public Schools."

–Organize Da Bay Take Back Our Schools Campaign, 2004

"San Francisco families are struggling to stay in one of the most expensive cities in the nation. We are standing our ground to demand that the Mayor launch a new plan to create, preserve and support truly affordable housing in our city."

–Coleman Advocates Budget for Families Campaign, 2006

SHAPE THE DEBATE: SECTION 3

Letters (& Images) to the Editor

WHAT IT IS

Letters to the editor are a great way to shape debates already in the news. Letters to the editor are just what they're called – short letters addressed to the editors of newspapers or magazines, that address stories that have recently appeared in the publication.

Letters to the editor can be used as defensive and offensive tactics in an organizing campaign. For folks from marginalized communities, letters to the editor are a quick and effective way to challenge biased articles. By writing a letter to the editor that documents and reframes bias, you are shaping the debate by defending your campaign and campaign allies against attacks.

You can also use letters to the editor as an offensive tactic, by piggybacking off existing news that relates to your issue. When using letters in this way, you are

commending the media outlet for an existing news story and using the rest of the letter to advance your own story.

Some newspapers also accept images to the editor. Use this tactic when you have a simple image to share that conveys your story, and that relates to a story recently in the newspaper.

HOW YOU SHARE IT

For organizers, letters to the editor are most effective when many people send in letters instead of just one person. When you come across a particularly biased story, first write a sample letter given the accompanying tools. Then send this sample letter out to allies, leaders and members with a clear ask to tailor the letter and email it directly to the editor and cc it to you for tracking purposes, within one-two days for daily papers, within one week for weekly papers, and within →

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Learn the tips.** Use the tipsheet to learn how to write a letter to the editor.
- 2. Draw on examples.** Use the two examples as models for your letter. One is an example of a defensive letter that responds to bias, the other is an example of an offensive letter that piggybacks off news. For more examples, look at the letters section of your local newspaper.
- 3. Write your letter.** Write your letter using the **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR WORKSHEET (P. 149)**.

two weeks for monthly or bimonthly magazines. Remember that with letters to the editor time is of the essence.

TIPS & TOOLS

- **LETTER TO THE EDITOR TIPS, P. 146**
- **SAMPLE LETTER RESPONDING TO BIAS, P. 147**
- **SAMPLE LETTER PIGGYBACKING OFF NEWS, P. 148**
- **LETTER TO THE EDITOR WORKSHEET, P. 149**

WORKSHEET

Letters To The Editor Tips

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

1. Find the article you want to respond to in today or yesterday's newspaper (any older and they won't print it).
2. Use the attached **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR WORKSHEET (P. 149)** to draft your letter.
3. **The Hook.** State your opinion about the news article in the first sentence, then refer to the article inside parentheses in this format: ("Title of press article," 3-letter month, day).
4. **The Problem.** State your opinion of the problem or bias clearly.
5. **The Facts.** Offer well-framed facts and statistics that correct the problem or add missing perspectives to the article. Use irony, soundbites and visual language.
6. **Your Solution.** Propose a solution.
7. **What's At Stake.** In the final sentence, restate what action must be taken and who's affected if action is not taken.
8. **Signature.** Sign the letter with your full name, position, organization and city where you are located.

SENDING THE LETTER

1. Always spell check!!!
2. Email your letter to the letters editor (you can usually find the email address in the letters section of the paper).

Sample Letter To The Editor Responding To Bias

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The San Francisco Chronicle

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. B10; LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

August 12, 2005

Development's impact

Editor -- Re your Aug. 10 editorial "Shakedown at City Hall," I'm disappointed to see *The Chronicle* take sides against average San Franciscans. What you call a political pastime is a vital mechanism for at-risk communities to ensure survival and development in the face of gentrification.

The nonprofit community fund approved by the Board of Supervisors this week will ensure that the long time residents of the South of Market will have the resources to improve Bessie Carmichael Elementary School and to create more parks and service centers that will improve the quality of life of the existing neighborhood—for all, including future residents of Rincon Hill.

Rather than put the squeeze on developers, the community stabilization fund allows developers to contribute directly to a more balanced, vibrant South of Market neighborhood.

The political power grab you describe seems to me nothing more than a supervisor effectively meeting the needs of his constituents. And the "pay-to-play" agreement you deride seems to me a fair exchange for the "hot real estate" developments that normally bring money to city government while pushing low-income residents away.

JENNIFER SORIANO

Sample Letter To The Editor Piggybacking Off News

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR PIGGYBACKING OFF NEWS

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The San Francisco Chronicle

JUNE 4, 2005, SATURDAY, FINAL EDITION

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. B6; LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Length: 1404 words

Headline: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Body:

Help schoolkids with buses to classes

Editor -- As part of the United Nations World Environment Day conference in San Francisco, leaders from Brazil, China and Colombia came to speak about the world-class transportation systems in their cities. But in the Bay Area, officials are making it hard for us to get to school and to our after-school activities and jobs.

Students at the public high schools we attend sometimes have to choose between paying bus fares and eating lunch. Many area schools don't fund school buses, so students use public buses.

The members of our youth group (Real Hard, a project of Kids First in Oakland) come from low-income communities. Our families don't have big polluting SUVs to drive us to school and soccer practice -- so we do the right thing for the environment by catching the bus.

But at its board meeting June 9, AC Transit may eliminate discounted passes for youth. That would increase the cost of getting to school and after-school programs from \$15 to \$77 a month.

We surveyed more than 1,000 East Bay high-school students and found that 87 percent of them cannot afford to pay more than \$15 a month. Even with the discount, 76 percent said they sometimes use their lunch money for bus fare.

How can we make something of ourselves if we can't even get to school? How can we become better people who make a difference in our communities?

We hope the mayors of our cities and the board of AC Transit are listening to the U.N. conferees. Perhaps they will come to understand that our hopes cannot be realized without affordable transportation. AC Transit and Bay Area governments should not just keep discounted youth passes -- they should make them free.

DOMINIQUE MURPHY

SASSIA HARRELL

ROBERT IBARRA

DEREKA WILLIAMS

Oakland

WORKSHEET**Letter to the Editor Worksheet**

(Title that makes your point):

(Start)

Editor –

The Hook:

Name the Article: ("title of press article," 3-letter abbreviation for month. date)

State the Problem:

The Facts:

The Solution:

What's at Stake:

Signature:

(Your Name)

(Position)

(Organization)

(Street Address) (City)

(Phone number)

SHAPE THE DEBATE: SECTION 4

Op-Eds

WHAT IT IS

Opinion-editorials are 500-800 word essays that get printed opposite the staff-written editorials in a newspaper. Op-eds are prime real estate for grassroots organizers who want to shape debate on their issue. Why? Because decision-makers pay attention to op-eds. The editorial pages, which include staff-written editorials, letters to the editor, and op-eds, are like a “town-hall” of debate that politicians and other decision-makers turn to when updating themselves on current issues.

So when it comes to building influence, getting an op-ed into your local paper is almost as good as having an insider

meeting with local politicians. For marginalized communities, op-eds are an important way to shape the debate because you can take a strong position unfiltered by reporters, and don’t have to worry about your message being distorted or lost. Op-eds also allow you to inject well-framed details, context and questions to deepen debate, and to position your organization or coalition as a key player on your issue.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING OP-EDS, P. 151**
- **SAMPLE OP-EDS, P. 125-154**

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Get to know the guidelines.** Use the **GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING OP-EDS (P. 151)** sheet to navigate your way through creating your strategic op-ed.
- 2. Learn from examples.** Use the accompanying samples to help you draft your op-ed.

WORKSHEET

Guidelines For Developing Op-Eds

- You need three things to write an effective op-ed: a good writer, a “credible” person to sign the op-ed, and enough time to develop the content, have it approved by your campaign leaders, and pitch it to op-ed editors.
- To have an op-ed placed, the writing quality of your op-ed must be on par with the writing quality of the outlet you’re trying to place it in. Appoint your best writer to the task of drafting the op-ed. This may not necessarily be the same person who signs the op-ed. Your op-ed must be signed by someone who is widely regarded as an “expert” on the issue at hand. This could be a local politician, an academic or think tank researcher, or another respected public official. If your organization has credibility on your issue, your organizational director, lead campaign organizer and/or a member leader could sign the op-ed.
- Once you’ve drafted the op-ed, make sure campaign decision-makers get a chance to edit it for sharpness and content. Pay special attention to making your headline sharp and catchy, and to including a photo or drawing that frames your argument – this headline and image will be the main “pitch” for your op-ed, and if the editors like them enough they may print the op-ed with the headline and images you submit.
- Then submit the op-ed by email or fax, with a short cover letter explaining why the op-ed is important, and referencing recent related articles from the outlet you’re pitching to.
- Followup with a phone call to alert the editor to your submission and tell them you’re offering an exclusive. If you don’t hear back within a week or two of your submission, you can begin to pitch other outlets in your local market. In general though, you shouldn’t pitch two outlets in the same market – if they both end up printing your op-ed your credibility will drop with both outlets, who won’t want to run the risk of printing op-eds that are not exclusive news.

Sample Op-Ed 1

Public turnabout on 'three strikes'



Chronicle Illustration

By Vincent Schiraldi and Esta Soler

What a difference a decade makes. Ten years ago, rightly shocked by the kidnapping and killing of 12-year-old Polly Klaas, 72 percent of California voters passed the harshest mandatory sentencing law in U.S. history — the “three strikes and you’re out” initiative.

According to a Field Poll released last month, now that voters have read the fine print and after a decade of experience with the costly and ineffective law, 3 of 4 Californians are ready to vote to amend “three strikes” in November, returning the law to its original intent of applying only to those convicted of violent crimes.

What have the voters learned in the last decade that would account for such a turnaround? Overall, that “three strikes” costs too much, does too little and targets the wrong people.

Although the proposition was sold to voters in 1994 as only going after the most violent and recalcitrant offenders, nearly two-thirds of people imprisoned under the law committed nonviolent crimes as their third strike. People such as Shane Reams, who was “struck out” for abetting the sale of \$20 worth of crack cocaine. Or Duane Silva, who got 26 years to life for swiping his neighbor’s VCR. Or Leondro Andrede, who was sentenced to 50 to life for shoplifting \$150 worth of Disney videotapes from a Kmart.

This is no trivial matter, either from the standpoint of fairness and decency or in terms of cost. Each person sentenced to 25 years to life will serve a minimum of 25 years. At more than \$30,000 per year per inmate, that costs

taxpayers \$750,000 for each life sentence. That’s a lot of taxpayers’ money to punish a \$150 theft.

At the end of 2003, more than 42,000 people — 1 of 4 California prisoners — are serving time under “three strikes.” That’s more than the entire prison population of 40 states combined.

Voters have also seen “three strikes”

Nearly two-thirds of people imprisoned committed nonviolent crimes as their third strike.

applied with particular vigor to people of color. African Americans are 10 times as likely to be imprisoned under “three strikes” as whites, and Latinos are 78 percent more likely to be struck out than whites.

Finally, voters have reason to seriously question the crime-control impact promised by proponents of “three strikes” sentencing — the basis for passing the law in the first place. Research by the Justice Policy Institute has shown that California counties that sent more people to prison under “three strikes” over the last decade actually had less of a drop in violent crime than counties that used “three strikes” more sparingly.

New York, a state without a “three strikes” law whose incarceration rate declined from 1994 to 2002, experienced a 20 percent greater drop in vio-

lent crime than California, which broke the bank expanding its prison system by more than 34,000 people during that same period.

Because it now looks as if “three strikes” will be returned to the voters’ original intent and will focus only on those convicted of violent offenses, policy-makers should act to assure that these long overdue reforms are correctly implemented. November’s “three strikes” reform initiative will save hundreds of millions of dollars annually — billions when you count avoided prison-construction costs.

The governor and Legislature should spend a third of those savings on effective re-entry programs to help those formerly incarcerated under “three strikes” to come home in a way that minimizes their likelihood of re-offending, reducing family violence and disruption, and maximizing their chances of becoming law-abiding, tax-paying citizens. By using some of the savings from the “three strikes” reform initiative in this way, policy-makers will be creating a fairer and more effective system that holds the real potential to reduce crime in California. That is the kind of win-win situation that victims and policy-makers alike should enthusiastically support.

Vincent Schiraldi is executive director of the Justice Policy Institute (www.justicepolicy.org), a criminal justice research organization in Washington. Esta Soler is president of the Family Violence Prevention Fund (www.fvpf.org), an organization based in San Francisco that works to end violence against women and children around the world. Chronicle July 5/04

Sample Op-Ed 2



MY WORD

More officers don't always mean less crime

AFTER reading the newspaper last week, a teenager I work with said to me, "This war on terrorism has everybody scared and even more people broke." It struck me that the domestic wars against crime and drugs led by local mayors and city officials are no less frightening and just as costly.

Last week, in response to a growth spurt in the homicide rate, Oakland City Council President Ignacio De La Fuente announced that a meeting would take place this Tuesday to discuss the efforts of Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown to "reduce crime" by putting an initiative on the November ballot to add 100 new officers to Oakland streets.

While the state budget is being given away to fight the war on terrorism, and the deficit looms large over our services and infrastructure, the cost of increasing the power of the Police Department is estimated at more than \$10 million to Oakland residents. Where will the money come from? Your tax dollars.

As we mourn the victims of street violence, those that are dead and those that have been caged until life is no longer meaningful, the people of Oakland are searching for new so-

lutions. The old mantra of more police equals more peace is getting old as Oakland residents become increasingly aware of the impact of disappearing jobs and services, the widening split between the haves and have-nots, and increasingly repressive social policy that escalates violence among community members.

After meeting with the members of Oakland-based labor and community groups, it is clear that the people of Oakland don't just want to prevent crime, they want to promote justice.

What Jerry Brown and the members of the City Council fail to realize is that studies have proven that an increase in the numbers of police officers does not lead to an increase in public safety. For example, in 1991, San Diego and Dallas had about the same ratio of police to population, yet Dallas had twice as much crime reported to the police, according to professor of criminology Richard Moran of Mount Holyoke College.

Cleveland and San Diego, meanwhile, had comparable crime rates even though Cleveland had twice as many police per capita. Moreover, Washington D.C. has both the highest murder rate and the most police per square foot of any city in America. What the

MALKIA A. CYRIL

people of the majority black Washington, D.C. might tell you is that the large numbers of police officers has led to the brutal repression of the under-represented, overtaxed citizens of America's capitol.

Along with many academics, case-workers, and even FBI statistics, USA Today reported that the states with the lowest crime rates have the lowest imprisonment rates, and the states with the highest crime rates have the highest imprisonment rates.

So, though there is no evidence to suggest that imprisonment reduces crime or that additional police means more safety, Mayor Jerry Brown is proposing that we spend our limited resources on a theory that has been proven wrong over and over again.

New methods of crime prevention must be explored; new priorities must be identified, and now is the perfect time to begin.

The theory of increased policing equaling safety, though wrong, is an echo of an old political mandate: create the fear of crime, then use all available

SAMPLE OP-ED 2 CONTINUED

and unavailable resources to police the public. We have all felt the impacts of the so-called war on crime, which has focused on the war on drugs, but do we really know the costs?

It has been estimated that George Bush senior spent more than 1 trillion dollars on the war on drugs, and yet the United States is still No. 1 in the demand for cocaine and incarcerates more people than does the entire continent of Africa.

HOWEVER great the economic costs, the social costs of these wars are far greater. UNICEF estimates that \$15 billion per year, a mere fraction of the cost of the war on drugs, over the next decade could permanently wipe out childhood hunger and malnutrition.

By this same comparison, spending \$10 million dollars in Oakland to fight crime with cops instead of by developing social policy that results in living wage jobs, safe food, relevant education, and affordable housing, seems like a slippery slope down which Oakland does not have to slide. Instead of continuing to fight wars we can't win against enemies that don't exist, maybe the City Council will do something new.

Malkia A. Cyril is a member of People United for a Better Oakland.

Transportation is a Youth Right: Oakland Kids First's Youth Bus Pass Campaign



Oakland Kids First's Bus Pass Campaign

In 2002, youth organizers from Oakland-based Kids First and Youth Together worked with a coalition of adult allies to win free and affordable bus transportation for low-income students in the area. In 2005, the local bus system, AC Transit, announced it was considering eliminating the youth bus passes due to budget cutbacks. Kids First youth, who had worked so hard to win the free bus pass, mobilized to pressure AC Transit into preserving and/or reducing a discounted youth bus pass for middle school and high school students. Without this discounted pass, they knew most low-income students wouldn't be able to get to school.

Oakland Kids First joined forces with the Transportation

Justice Working Group (TJWG) to use the media and direct action to pressure AC Transit into keeping the discounted youth passes, and to put the spotlight on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the regional agency in charge of disbursing funds to the various public transportation systems throughout the Bay Area.

With the help of front-page news coverage in the Oakland Tribune, Kids First and the TJWG won. Discounted youth passes were preserved, and a clear message was sent to AC Transit: affordable public transportation is a youth right, and should be secured at little to no cost to youth themselves. →

TRANSPORTATION IS A YOUTH RIGHT CONT.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

- KIDS FIRST PIGGYBACKED OFF RACIAL JUSTICE NEWS.** Kids First launched their “Free Transportation to Get our Education” campaign shortly after East Bay Bus Riders filed a lawsuit against the MTC’s “separate and unequal transportation” practices. Data from the National Transit Database showed that the commuter train from San Francisco to Silicon Valley had 60 percent white riders and received a subsidy of \$13.79 per rider, while AC transit had only 20.6 percent white riders and received a subsidy of only \$2.78 per rider. This story made local news headlines, and Kids First quickly jumped into the debate.
- KIDS FIRST SPOKESPEOPLE WERE WELL-TRAINED TO ENTER THE DEBATE.** Kids First brought in the YMC to train their spokespeople. Twelve Kids First Organizers went through a four-hour spokesperson training to practice staying on message and controlling the debate in media interviews. Kids First’s Associate Director Julie Iny said, “The youth left that training feeling very confident”. When Kids First testified in front of the Transportation Commission, and when they staged an action in front of the AC Transit Board of Directors, they were ready to be dynamic credible speakers in front of the media.
- KIDS FIRST SHAPED THE DEBATE BY PIGGY-BACKING OFF NEWS.** Through daily monitoring Kids First identified coverage of the United Nations World Environment Day as relevant news to piggy-back off of. They wrote a letter to the editor that localized the story by telling the story of their youth bus pass campaign. Four youth organizers signed the letter and ensured that Kids First was mentioned in the body of the letter.
- KIDS FIRST CONDUCTED YOUTH-LED RESEARCH THAT BUILT THEIR CREDIBILITY, AND PROVIDED**

THE CONTENT FOR CLEAR, COMPELLING TALKING POINTS. Kids First Organizers and their allies from the Transportation Justice Working Group surveyed 1000 students at high schools across the East Bay to determine how the elimination of a youth bus pass would affect them. They translated their findings into key talking points, for example:

- 83% of youth who had the free bus pass use the bus regularly or frequently.
- 92% of youth could not afford a bus pass that costs more than \$15.
- 80% of youth surveyed who had the free bus pass sometimes use their lunch money to get to and from school.

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

While Kids First was happy with the coverage they received, they noted that there was no attribution of Kids First or the Transportation Justice Working Group in most of the media stories. They learned that spokespeople should always say their organizational affiliation when introducing themselves to the media, and that all signs and media materials should clearly state their organization’s name.

IMPACTS

Oakland Kids First won their campaign to preserve youth bus passes, in part because of the strong inter-generational support of the TJWC, and in part because of the high-profile news coverage on the issue. They earned a front-page story in the Oakland Tribune, coverage on major TV networks and radio shows, and stories in community and ethnic media. The coverage generated centered the dynamic voices of Kids First’s stellar spokespeople. According to Associate Director Julie Iny, “The hardship on young people, the need to target MTC for more money – our messages really got out clearly.”



- 1 Scope The Scene
- 2 Chart Your Course
- 3 Assume Your Position
- 4 Enter The Debate
- 5 Shape The Debate
- 6 **BUILD ON YOUR SUCCESS**

BUILD ON YOUR SUCCESS



1. TRACKING REPORTERS
2. TRACKING COVERAGE
3. EVALUATING COVERAGE
4. PLANNING NEXT STEPS
5. SHARING VICTORIES & LESSONS LEARNED

CHAPTER

6

BUILD ON YOUR SUCCESS

IT'S TIME FOR DELIBERATE DOCUMENTATION & EVALUATION.

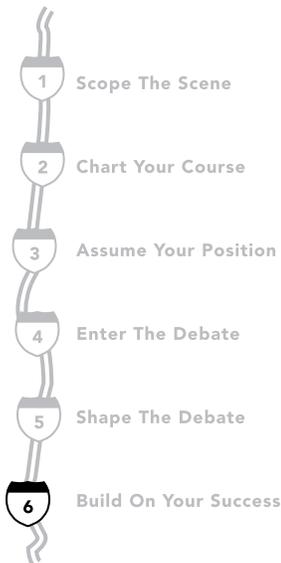
Congratulations, you've reached your destination! But you also know your destination is really just one short-term stop in a long-term journey towards youth rights and racial justice. In any case you've

reached a rest stop that allows you to sit back and reflect on how far you've come. At each step of the way you've documented your work. By now you have a bus full of people, relationships with reporters, and a growing file of media coverage earned along the way. Now you want to look back and take stock of what you've done well and what you could have been done better.

It's easy to let this last stage of your trip slip because it's tempting to just keep cruising. But this stage is critical to ensuring that you don't drive off the map. So park the bus and get out from behind the wheel. It's time for deliberate documentation and evaluation.

Corporations and bigger non-profits document media coverage using corporate clipping services. Most grassroots organizing groups can't afford to use these tools. We rely on people power and a few practical tools to track and evaluate coverage. The tips and tools in this last section will help you track down your media coverage and assess how effective you were at entering and shaping the debate.

Once you've taken stock of your trip, an essential follow-through step is sharing your success. Grassroots organizing groups across the country need successful communications case studies on which to model their work. Sharing your success through case studies and grassroots distribution ensures that your lessons learned contribute to the movement- building journey toward justice.



GLOSSARY

Case Studies: in organizing, case studies are narrative stories of success that highlight best practices, lessons learned, impacts, and steps for replication.

Clipping Services: corporations that scan media for materials about your organization, campaign or issue.

Documentation: gathering, organizing, and filing documents to keep a record of your campaign purpose, process and outcomes.

Evaluation: assessing the effectiveness of an activity, program or campaign to see if you've met your goals and objectives

Lessons Learned: looking back, what you would have done differently and how you would do it differently to better meet your goals.

Media Footprint: a corporate marketing term that means the "tracks" or "mark" you leave on your target audiences, measured by profit. For organizers, we flip this term and use it to mean the mark you leave on public debate.

Tracking: Keeping track of something, like keeping track of media coverage by hunting it down, clipping it, and filing it away.

BUILD ON YOUR SUCCESS: SECTION 1

Tracking & Evaluating Coverage

WHAT IT IS

As grassroots organizers with not much time on our hands, we can let tracking and evaluating coverage slip off our plates. Once a media tactic is completed, we tend to automatically move on to the next action. But just like planning helps you chart your course and do only the work that's most strategic, tracking and evaluating coverage will help you document your successes and challenges, and will help sharpen your strategy for future phases of your media campaign. It's like fine-tuning your bus for the next trip.

Tracking is just a fancy word for clipping copies of media coverage you've earned, so you can document the media "footprint" you're making on the terrain of public debate. Evaluating coverage can be a simple and rewarding process that allows you to assess the size and quality of your media "footprint". Conducted together after media events or at regular intervals of a media campaign, consistent tracking and evaluation of coverage will allow you to better assess your overall media campaign, and will give you the content you need to share successes and lessons learned.

Organizations with a budget for communications sometimes pay clipping services to track coverage of their organization. These services can vary from 100-300 per

month, and some require a minimum contract of three months. These services are generally worth it only if you are generating several media hits per week. (**SEE RESOURCES, P. 176**).

Otherwise, this is yet another time for grassroots organizations to rely on people power to get the job done.

HOW YOU SHARE IT

Evaluating coverage can be a great leadership development opportunity for members and leaders, as well as staff. You can set up an evaluation discussion by gathering up to 20 people and leading them through a facilitated discussion using the questions on the accompanying **MEDIA COVERAGE EVALUATION FORM (P. 163)**. Begin the discussion with a definition of terms on the sheet. Then frame the discussion as an opportunity for everyone to assess the coverage earned and evaluate challenges and successes. The outcome of the discussion will be a documented evaluation of each story, which will then be used to plan next steps in the media campaign. View one TV clip or listen to one radio clip together, and model an evaluation of that clip by sharing an evaluation form you've already filled out for that clip. Then review select coverage together, by reading print stories aloud and listening to and →

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Delegate coverage tracking.** Use the accompanying **MEDIA SIGN-IN SHEET (P. 161)** to assign staff, leaders, allies and friends to tracking specific stories immediately after a media event.
- 2. Track coverage now to save time and money later.** Use the accompanying **TRACKING TIPS (P. 162)** to guide you in tracking down your coverage in a timely fashion. The longer you wait to clip your coverage, the harder and more expensive it gets to track it down.
- 3. Evaluate your coverage.** Once you have your coverage clipped, you're ready to evaluate each story. Use the accompanying **MEDIA COVERAGE EVALUATION FORM (P. 163)** as a tool to guide your evaluation.

Remember that a successful media story clearly conveys your frame and message, quotes your spokespeople, and credits your organization as a key player in the issue. A good story does NOT just tell your side of the story. Instead, a good story clearly states your position in the context of other positions. And ideally, your solutions and values ring most loud and clear. The best stories actually teach you something – they may include details, facts and other information about your issue that you didn't know.

viewing TV and radio clips together, and facilitating a large group or small group discussion about each story.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **MEDIA SIGN-IN SHEET, P. 161**
- **MEDIA COVERAGE TRACKING TIPS, P. 162**
- **MEDIA COVERAGE EVALUATION FORM, P. 163**

WORKSHEET

Media Sign-In Sheet

Event:	Date:
--------	-------

OUTLET	REPORTER
--------	----------

PHONE	EMAIL
-------	-------

WHEN WILL STORY APPEAR?	WHO WILL TRACK?
-------------------------	-----------------

OUTLET	REPORTER
--------	----------

PHONE	EMAIL
-------	-------

WHEN WILL STORY APPEAR?	WHO WILL TRACK?
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OUTLET	REPORTER
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PHONE	EMAIL
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WHEN WILL STORY APPEAR?	WHO WILL TRACK?
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OUTLET	REPORTER
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PHONE	EMAIL
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WHEN WILL STORY APPEAR?	WHO WILL TRACK?
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OUTLET	REPORTER
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PHONE	EMAIL
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WHEN WILL STORY APPEAR?	WHO WILL TRACK?
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WORKSHEET

Media Coverage Tracking Tips

FOR ALL MEDIUMS, FOLLOW THESE GENERAL TIPS:

- Ask the reporter when s/he thinks the story will run.
- If they are from a community-based outlet or if you have a particularly good relationship with them, ask them if they'll send you copies of the story.
- If you don't see or hear the story, email the reporter to inquire – sometimes stories get cut or pushed off to a later publication date by editors.

PRINT

- For daily papers, check for the story the day after your media event, or weekly papers, check the week after etc.
- Always get at least three hard copy originals of print stories for your documentation files.

RADIO

- Ask the radio reporter or producer if they have online archives of their broadcasts, and if they are downloadable. If so, find your story online and download it to your music player. Then you should be able to email this story, post it to a website, or burn it to a CD.
- If the outlet does not post its broadcasts, then ask if you can get a recording from the reporter or producer. This usually only works with community-based outlets.
- If the above two options don't work, find someone with a good old-fashioned tape recorder who can tape the broadcast when it airs.

TV

- In advance of your media event, mobilize people with DVD recorders or VCR recorders or technology like Tivo to record the TV news when your story airs.
- Always ask at least 2 people to tape the same story, to have backup in case of technical difficulties (there usually are technical difficulties).
- Make at least two copies of each TV story for your documentation files
- If you miss the chance to record TV stories yourself, go to a professional clipping service. Know the date and time of the TV news show in which your story appeared, and have keywords ready for the clipping service staff to search by. These services usually cost about 40-50 bucks per story, but are well worth as a last resort. See the resources section for clipping service contacts.

WEB

- The easiest format to track. Do a google news search! Do blogs searches!
- You can also set up an alert system on google or yahoo, that searches and alerts you to news coverage containing keywords, like your campaign or organization name.

WORKSHEET

Media Coverage Evaluation Form

STORY NAME:	DATE OF STORY:
REPORTER:	MEDIA OUTLET:

RACIAL JUSTICE FRAME AND MESSAGES

What is the problem/conflict and who is to blame? What solutions are offered, if any?

What is the main message in this story?

On a scale of 1-5 rate how clearly our frame and message was conveyed in this story:

1	2	3	4	5
NOT AT ALL		SOMEWHAT		LOUD AND CLEAR!

How clearly was institutional racism exposed?

1	2	3	4	5
NOT AT ALL		SOMEWHAT		LOUD AND CLEAR!

Were racial justice solutions proposed? **Y** **N** EXPLAIN:

SPOKESPEOPLE

How many of our spokespeople were quoted?

0	1	2	3	More than 3
---	---	---	---	-------------

Who else was quoted?

How were our spokespeople positioned versus the other characters? What role did they play in the story?



MEDIA COVERAGE EVALUATION FORM CONT.

ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRIBUTION

Was our organization mentioned? What role does it play in the story?

What other organizations were mentioned? What role do they play in the story?

STEREOTYPES AND BIAS

What racial, gender, class or other stereotypes are present in this story if any?

What perspectives or voices are missing, if any?

What policy or history context, stats, facts or trends are missing, if any?

BUILD ON YOUR SUCCESS: SECTION 2

Campaign Evaluation & Next Steps

WHAT IT IS

Once you have coverage tracked and evaluated, you can begin the bigger process of assessing your outcomes, strategy, research and capacity needs.

Planning next steps begins with an overall evaluation of your media campaign. This can happen at the end of your me-

dia campaign, or at regular intervals (say, bimonthly or quarterly) during media campaigns that are more than 6 months long.

WHAT YOU NEED

- **MEDIA DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST, P. 166**
- **THE FOUR-STEP REFLECTION CHECK, P. 167**

WHAT YOU DO

- 1. Make sure you've documented everything.** Use the **MEDIA DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST (P. 166)** to make sure you've documented all your hard work. This documentation will help you and your successors improve on your work so you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time you do a media campaign.
- 2. Evaluate your campaign and plan next steps.** USE THE **ACCOMPANYING FOUR-STEP REFLECTION CHECK (P. 167)** to guide your evaluation process. Give yourselves at least two hours to have a thorough evaluation discussion with staff and member leaders.

WORKSHEET**Media Documentation Checklist**

- Media Plan, frames, messages, story, soundbites and talking points documented
- Press materials filed (press release, press kit etc.) in computer and hard copy
- Coverage clipped and filed
- "Best of coverage" displayed in binder or scanned in computer
- Press list updated with accurate contact info and comments on reporters
- Evaluation completed and filed
- Next Steps form completed and filed

WORKSHEET

The Four-Step Reflection Check

AN EVALUATION AND NEXT STEPS PLANNING TOOL TO TAKE STOCK OF SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES IN COMMUNICATING JUSTICE

STEP 1: REFLECT ON YOUR MEDIA STRATEGY

- Has your media strategy taken you closer to achieving your organizing goals?
- Has it helped you build or influence your base?
- Has it helped you build credibility and influence your targets?
- Has it helped you neutralize your opposition?

Did you achieve your media plan outcomes?

What worked well?

What could be better?

How will you adjust your media strategy knowing what you know now?

STEP 2: ASSESS YOUR RESEARCH NEEDS

- Have you learned more about what key players say about this issue?
- Do you have a better understanding of targets' weaknesses/contradictions?
- Do you have a better understanding of your issue's policy landscape?

What additional research do you need to do to sharpen your campaign and media strategy?

STEP 3: REFLECT ON YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

- Have you built or strengthened relationships with other grassroots organizations through your media work? With intermediaries?
- Do you have stronger relationships with reporters who cover your issue?
- Have you addressed any previous negative history with outlets or reporters through editorial meetings or other tactics?



THE FOUR-STEP REFLECTION CHECK CONT.

What additional partnerships/relationships do you need to strengthen your media work?

What work will you need to do to maintain existing relationships with allies? With reporters?

STEP 4: REFLECT ON YOUR CAPACITY

- Have you institutionalized media roles and processes through your media campaign work?
- Have you identified opportunities to raise funds for media work?
- Do you have infrastructure for tracking your press contacts, press releases and press coverage?

What next steps will you take to institutionalize/maintain media roles and systems in your organization?

What support do you need in doing this?

BUILD ON YOUR SUCCESS: SECTION 3

Sharing Victories & Lessons Learned

WHAT IT IS

Congratulations! You've done the creative work of scoping the scene, charting your course, taking a stand, and entering and shaping the debate. You've reflected on your challenges and successes and planned next steps for sharpening your strategy and building your capacity and influence. You've done the gruntwork of documentation and the strategic work of evaluation and planning next steps.

Now's the best part – take time to package and share what you've accomplished and what you've learned. Why? Not just to brag, though bragging's not a bad thing, but for five important reasons:

1. Claiming and sharing your victories is a key part of shaping the debate
2. Sharing victories shows other grass-roots organizations what's possible
3. Sharing lessons learned helps other grass-roots organizations build from your experience and avoid "reinventing the wheel"
4. Sharing victories with funders helps build the field of strategic communications for racial justice and youth rights
5. Sharing victories with funders helps your organization secure funding for ongoing communications work

WHAT YOU NEED

- **CASE STUDY OUTLINE, P. 170**
- **JUST CAUSE OAKLAND PRODUCT CLIP PACKAGE, P. 171**

WHAT YOU DO

1. Write up a case study. Use the accompanying case study outline to craft your victory story. There are infinite ways to share your victories and lessons learned – there are as many ways as there are media tactics you can dream up. But just like with media tactics, documentation tactics must be based on a strategic story you want to share. The packaging and distribution follows.

2. Share your case study. Once you've drafted and re-drafted and finalized this case study, you'll be ready to post this case study on your website and ally's websites – share yours with us by sending an email to echo@youthmediacouncil.org! You'll also be ready to use this case study as a narrative guide for powerpoints, mini-films, and product clip packages that highlight your materials and coverage. See the **JUST CAUSE OAKLAND PRODUCT CLIP PACKAGE, P. 171** included at the end of this section.

WORKSHEET

Case Study Outline

Overview: What, who, where, when, why.

Steps to Success: Highlight the best practices of your communications work and how you accomplished them.

Challenges and Lessons Learned: What was difficult? How did you overcome it?

Impacts: What outcomes did you achieve? How was coverage changed? How was policy changed? What new models or frameworks have you introduced, what new infrastructure or relationships were built?

CASE STUDY

Just Cause Oakland:

CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS TO SHIFT OAKLAND'S DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

The 2005 census confirmed for Just Cause Oakland (JCO) what they already knew from organizing in Oakland, California: people of color, and in particular black people, are being displaced at an alarming rate. The survey showed that upwards of 25% of the black families in Oakland – once a cultural and economic center for African Americans in the United States – had been forced to leave in the last 5 years alone.

Just Cause approached the Youth Media Council (YMC) for support in crafting a communications campaign that would strengthen their long-term organizing work to build community control over local development. They wanted to introduce a new frame to their base and to incoming Mayor Ron Dellums that centered race and economic exploitation at the heart of the Oakland development debate.

The dominant question in media coverage had been: Can Oakland attract the business investment it needs to be a world-class city? With the help of YMC, Just Cause introduced a new question: Why are Black folks continually forced to move in search of opportunity?

Through an intensive six-month communications campaign that targeted low income tenants, workers and homeowners in west Oakland and city policy makers like Mayor-elect Ron Dellums and his administration, Just Cause successfully built their credibility and influence over the Oakland development debate.

Since the campaign, the San Francisco Chronicle and local broadcast outlets have continued to ask

questions about the flight of communities of color from the Bay, and Oakland Mayor Dellums administration's task forces have taken a more comprehensive approach to development not focused solely on luxury housing.

STEPS TO SUCCESS:

- **JCO and YMC used a participatory communications process that centered the expertise of organizers and leaders in strategy development, planning, and storytelling.** As a result the communications campaign was timely, relevant, and addressed the authentic needs and vision of people impacted by displacement and predatory development. Organizers and leaders also developed skills in communications planning and storytelling through this participatory process.
- **JCO framed a powerful story about forced migration.** After landscaping imminent policy fights, JCO strategically chose to frame their approach to displacement around a core story of forced migration. The personal stories of member leaders JCO organizers showed that displacement from West Oakland was yet another stage of forced migration that began with the slave trade, continued with migration from the south, and continues in the form of predatory development today.
- **JCO chose creative communications tactics that won attention from the media and their base** – While Just Cause could have chosen a run-of-the-mill traditional presswork campaign writing letters to the editor and →

placing op-eds, Just Cause instead centered creative tactics to communicate to their audiences and earn media coverage. Just Cause bought a 3-month lease on a billboard strategically in an empty lot by the West Oakland BART station, and worked with local designer Favianna Rodriguez to translate their message into a beautiful billboard sized “advertisement” against displacement. They spread the message throughout the neighborhood by putting up posters with the same message and similar design. They also chose to organize a “West Oakland Gentrification Tour” that highlighted areas of luxury development and targeted disinvestment throughout West Oakland. Just Cause’s creative tactics earned them high profile coverage in local news media, including 2 major TV network stories and a number of newspaper stories.

- **JCO used their billboard, posters and media coverage as tools for member development and base-building.** During outreach, JCO is following up with West Oakland residents to determine what if any media they saw, and to gauge resident’s level of agreement with JCO’s frame. JCO will use this info/data to develop targeted outreach and education activities in the neighborhood.

CHALLENGES:

Organizational capacity and dedicated funding continue to be the biggest challenges for Just Cause

Oakland, and similar groups, to do long term communications strategy work in communities facing a democracy divide.

IMPACTS: SHIFTING THE DEBATE

Just Cause Oakland:

- **Built media skills and capacity** by creating a media roles division chart for staff, and conducting a storytelling training for six Just Cause members who were the main spokespeople for the campaign.
- **Earned extensive coverage**, including a feature-length *San Francisco Chronicle* story, two major TV network stories, seven community paper stories, and three radio stories including one national NPR story.
- **Built credibility and influence.** Just Cause member spokespeople were the main sources quoted in all of stories earned. By the time the last story aired, NPR reporters consulted Just Cause staff as an “expert” on affordable housing in Oakland and were found in at least one opinion column in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Just Cause’s investment and short media campaign is proof that participatory communications works, and can be a path to communities finding their power. Just Cause is now launching a long term organizing and communications plan to continue the struggle for west Oaklanders’ right to live, work and play in the city.

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San Francisco Chronicle

BAY AREA

AND CALIFORNIA

OAKLAND

Dellums' team tours gritty West Oakland

By Christopher Heredia
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Members of Mayor-elect Ron Dellums' transition team took a morning bus tour Saturday through rough-and-tumble West Oakland.

Leading the tour was a small group of affordable-housing activists who demanded that Oakland's new mayor shift the city's economic development strategy away from attracting mainly market-rate housing and toward drawing developers who will also provide housing affordable for poor people — and they mostly had the neighborhood's African American residents in mind.

The activists, who call their group Just Cause, talked about the working-class neighborhood's need

► OAKLAND: Page B2

Residents hope progress honors past

► OAKLAND
From Page B1

for blue-collar and environmentally friendly jobs, job training and programs to help residents continue to live there, as well as efforts to help steer the area's teenagers away from violence.

"This tour is not academic nor shown through the press' eyes, it's from the people's lens," said Andre Wright, a member of Just Cause, one of several tenant and affordable-housing activist groups in Oakland.

The two-hour tour covered the good, the bad and the ugly, pointing out condominium developments sprouting up that the activists said lower-income families can't afford and the planned development at the train station at 16th

and Wood streets — the result of years of negotiations between community groups and a developer.

In contrast to most of the housing built in Oakland in the last decade, the project appeals to Just Cause because Holliday Development has agreed to set aside a portion of the housing in it for rent and sale to lower-income residents. Holliday also plans to preserve the station's historic components to showcase contributions to the region by the neighborhood's African American residents.

Dellums' uncle C.L. Dellums, who lived in West Oakland in its heyday six decades ago, was a founding member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the nation's first African American-led labor union. It formed in 1925.

The 71-year-old mayor-elect himself grew up in West Oakland, when it had a flourishing black business community.

The bus passed ramshackle, boarded-up Victorians, graffiti-marred vacant buildings, mothballed industrial plants and the former stomping grounds of neighborhood glitterati such as former Mayor Lionel Wilson.

The tour also took in newly refurbished homes and other signs of hope — the neatly manicured Mandela Parkway and young rappers who performed for the group, extolling the virtues of self-improvement, peace on the streets, and eradication of pollution, racism, nicotine and alcohol from the community.

Black families began flocking to the neighborhood in the 1940s

and 1950s, fleeing racism in the South and seeking economic opportunity in what came to be known as the "Harlem of the West." They were part of the same migration that brought African Americans to work in Richmond's shipyards and on farms across the state.

The train station, which opened in 1912 and closed in 1989, was a launching pad for African American life and culture in West Oakland and surrounding communities.

Resident Carrie Owens, 63, told how her family arrived by train 60 years ago.

"West Oakland was a hub of African American culture," she said, noting the streetcars that used to ferry residents around the neighborhood.

Adults worked in nearby industry or with the railroad, and people of all ages had plenty of recreation. DeFremery Park, which still exists

today, was a popular hangout, and there were 25-cent dances and a bustling jazz and blues scene.

"By the mid-'60s, residents were leaving, replaced by urban renewal," Owens told the 20 participants in the tour. "The war industry jobs dried up. Today black West Oakland is in a crisis. It'll take a groundswell of support from progressive people to turn it around."

Jennifer Dhillon, who recently bought a home in West Oakland and walked by the tour group just as it was setting out, said Just Cause's billboard on Seventh Street denouncing gentrification has caused some concern.

"Several people in the neighborhood have commented to me that it's a little ambiguous," she said. "Centrifcation is a loaded word, and not everyone understands how it works. All newer residents aren't bad. I'd like to see a coalition come together — the

new residents and the old working together to build a neighborhood for everyone. I'd sure hate to see it develop into an us-versus-them mentality."

Tony West, a top Dellums aide said he appreciated hearing residents' stories and said the train station project was a good example of the community coming together to plan development to suit residents of all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

"For me it was a very good opportunity to get a sense of what's going on in Oakland," he said after the tour ended. "It was most helpful to hear from West Oaklanders what is happening in their community, what their hopes and dreams are. Those hopes are certainly consistent with what I've heard Mayor-elect Dellums express for Oakland."

E-mail Christopher Heredia at cheredia@sichronicle.com.

Just Cause Oakland
Product Clip Package



West Oakland rallies for community control of development

Join 'West Oakland: Our Way' rally Thursday, 3:30, 7th & Chester

by Rishi Awatramani

Oakland - On Monday morning, Just Cause Oakland launched a billboard in the heart of West Oakland to tell the story of the profit motive that drives developers and to call on the community to organize for a new kind of development that guarantees the right of the West Oaklanders to find opportunity where they live

See COMMUNITY, page 9



The Just Cause billboard shows gentrifying developers pushing Blacks out of West Oakland.

OAKLAND POST

"Where there is no vision the people will perish..." Proverbs 29:18

.com

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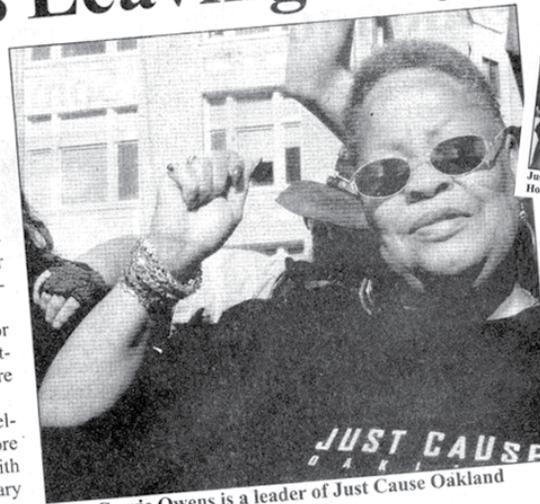
Just Cause Oakland: Blacks Leaving City

By Post Staff

With the 2006 Census update reporting that 25% of Oakland's Black population has been forced to leave the city over the last five years, Just Cause Oakland is launching a campaign to fight displacement at its root source and offer a new urban vision for community based development.

The group is best known for fighting for the rights of evicted tenants, many of whom are African Americans.

Mayor-Elect Ronald V. Dellums has said he supports more diversity and inclusion with developers and inclusionary zoning to make sure the poor are not pushed out of Oakland, a clear departure from the policies of Mayor Jerry Brown. Brown called for 10,000 new residents downtown. Critics say rising costs for housing continue to force Blacks out of Oakland. Dellums has said he



Carrie Owens is a leader of Just Cause Oakland

at Chester in West Oakland that condemns the "negative trends of economic development shaping Oakland today." Members of Just Cause Oakland said they launched their long-term campaign in West Oakland because of

marks of gentrification. "We were forced to flee the South because of hatred and

Continued on page 5

West Oakland Fights for Housing



Just Cause holds a rally at their new billboard on 7th Street. Young MCs from Covenant House shared conscious rap against gentrification. See story on page 3.

Oakland Group Concerned

Continued from page 3

ack of opportunity and now we're being forced to leave Oakland because of Jerry Brown-style predatory development," said Carrie Owens, Just Cause Oakland member. "That's Gentrification. Just Cause Oakland says that Jerry Brown worked closely with developers to create a Real Estate Machine in Oakland that greased the city's wheels for developers to turn Oakland into a bedroom community for the wealthy. Oakland is now ranked as the 8th best place for business in the U.S. But as de-industrialized cities like Oakland transform into information and technology super-

from building suburbs, developers' promises for economic development of low-income neighborhoods of color are merely a mask for a new round of profit making. "Oakland residents deserve stability and a real commitment to economic progress and growth," said Owens.

Just Cause member Yvonne Smith said "Where do black folks have to go to find opportunity? Are our leaders and politicians going to stand up to land speculators and profit hungry developers? Or will working class black people again be displaced, dispersed and devalued?"

West Oakland Rallies For Affordable Housing

By Post Staff

After voters passed Measure 1C and rejected Prop. 90, West Oakland residents and Just Cause Oakland rallied at an empty lot at the site of their new billboard, which is part of an outreach effort to push for "a new direction for community development in Oakland."

"The election results are a clear statement from voters that developers must not be allowed to treat neighborhoods as their playground, and that more must be done to build af-



This is the billboard that has been erected in West Oakland.

Just Cause Oakland Product Clip Package

RESOURCES

FREE TRACKING TOOLS

- Google alerts: <http://www.google.com/alerts>
- Yahoo alerts: <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/alerts/>

CLIPPING SERVICES

Many clipping services have free trials. Check em out and see if they work for you. Here are a few to try, YMC does not endorse these particular companies, we offer them to you as options to kick off your research.

- Custom Scoop: <http://www.customscoop.com/freetrial>
- Cyber Alert (scans only online sources):
<https://secure.cyberalert.com/ftorder.html>
- Universal Information Services: <http://www.universal-info.com>
- Scoop: <http://www.scoop.com>

Communicate Justice 101 Feedback Form

Talk back to us! Tell us what you think of this toolkit so we can make it more useful for you. We'll update portions of the toolkit annually, and send you new and improved versions of specific sections. You can recycle the old sections and pop the new ones straight into your binder! But we need direction from you so please take a few minutes to fill out this form and fax or email it back to us (contact info below).

What do you like most about this toolkit?

What sections did you find the most helpful?

What did you find confusing or irrelevant?

What would you like to see more of?

What would you like to see less of?

What's missing from this toolkit (be as specific as possible)?

How has this toolkit helped your work?

Any other comments?

Your name and organization (optional)

Please fax this form to 510.251.9810 ATTN: Associate Director. You can also download this form from echo.youthmediacouncil.org and email it back to echo@youthmediacouncil.org.

Participating Organizations

Berkeley Media Studies Group

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Berkeley, CA 94704
510-204-9700
bmsg@bmsg.org
www.bmsg.org

Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth

459 Vienna Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
Phone: (415) 239-0161
info@colemanadvocates.org
www.colemanadvocates.org

Creative Interventions

1904 Franklin St., Suite 200
Oakland CA 94612-2912
510-452-8595
info@creative-interventions.org
www.creative-interventions.org

The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

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510.428.3939
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www.ellabakercenter.org

Just Cause Oakland

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Kids First Oakland

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http://www.kidsfirstoakland.org/

The Movement Strategy Center

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http://www.movementstrategy.org

The Praxis Project

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510.645.9209
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“Whoever
Controls the
News Shapes
Our Destiny”

– George Clinton

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