



Answering the Three Key Questions for Advocacy Campaigns

There is nothing more important in advocacy campaigns than focusing everything we do on the answers to three key questions: (1) What do you want? (2) Why do you want it? (3) Who has the power to give it to you? The answers to those three questions must guide everything we do. Every action we take – every event, every press release, every coalition member we recruit, every grassroots action alert we launch -- all should be tailored and customized to our goal (what we want) and the specific decision maker who has the power to give it to us. By becoming “decision-maker obsessed”, we dramatically increase our chances of success and avoid wasting time and energy on strategies and tactics that won’t help us reach our goal. Far too often, well-intentioned advocates rush into tactics without being intentional about their goal *first*.

(1) What do you want?

What specifically do you want to change?

- What is the law, ordinance, regulation, system or policy that will be different at the end of your campaign?
- What is the tangible end goal that you seek?
- What is your concrete “ask”?

(2) Why do you want it?

What is the data that defines the problem and defends your solution (what you want)?

(3) Who has the power to give it to you?

What decision maker or decision making body has the power to do what you want done? Be as specific as possible.

- If the decision making authority rests with a legislative body or an institution, who are the specific individuals that have the real decision-making power?
- At the end of the day, who has the final say in making the change you seek?