

How to... plan a Campaign

By putting sufficient time and thought into the planning stages of an event, action or campaign, you can improve your chances of success. A lot about effective planning is simply common sense. But it is always helpful to look at the tasks you'll need to perform in a systematic way. And failure to spend sufficient time analysing and co-ordinating your activity can lead to problems.

The most important thing is to clarify what your aims are. You should ask yourselves:

- What is the thing that we want to do something about? E.g. the rules of world trade are unfair and cause poverty and suffering.
- What task (event, stunt, or other activity) will you undertake to address that concern? E.g. a public meeting with your local MP to discuss world trade issues.
- How will performing that task meet the concern that you have identified? E.g. *to persuade MPs to lobby the relevant government ministers.*

The Activist Team will be able to provide advice on Oxfam's current campaigns priorities.

Planning...

- Hold a brainstorm to come up with as many ideas as possible
- Decide what individual pieces of work will need to be done.
- Create a timeline – when do individual tasks need to be done by?
- Estimate time and cost – will you have the necessary resources?
- Prioritise – some tasks will be more crucial (and time-dependent) than others.
- Assess possible risks and take action, e.g. health and safety, insurance.
- Keep going back to your initial aims: are you on track to meet them?

Making it happen

Having decided on the tasks, when, how and by whom they will be done, and considered the resources you'll need, you can get on with putting the plan into action.

You may well need to meet more than once to check you are on track.

A few tips to help you do this successfully:

- Plan in enough time for meetings: work back from the proposed date of the action.
- Use your agenda effectively: be concise; use action points; set a date for your next meeting.
- Allocate tasks widely. Delegation is important! By involving people, you will make them feel they have a stake in the event's success.
- Consider whether there is a need for someone to take on a "project manager" role.
- Don't forget to conduct an evaluation after the event: it will help you do even better next time!

How to design effective materials

Before starting to design any materials such as posters and leaflets, whether it be to advertise your Group, or publicise an event or meeting, it is important to begin by thinking creatively about what it is exactly that you want to achieve.

Start with a "brainstorming" session, to come up with as many ideas as possible. Once you have run out of ideas, you can then spend a further session working out which ideas are realistic proposals to be developed.

Make sure you can answer these questions before going ahead with designing any piece of material, big or small:

1. *What is the objective of this piece of communication?*
 - What do you want to advertise or promote using this material?
 - What do you want your audience to know or do as a result of seeing it?
 - Will it be used in conjunction with any other materials?
2. *Who are your audience(s)?*
 - Who exactly is your target audience?
 - How much do they know?
 - What are their behaviours/characteristics/interests?
 - Where and how will they see the materials?

3. *What is your key message(s)?*

- How will these messages be expressed?
- Are they visual or written?
- What is the appropriate style and “tone of voice”?
E.g. fun, engaging, businesslike, etc.

4. *What information do you need to include?*

- For example, the date and location of an event, contact details, an explanation of your event or Group.
- The Oxfam logo, Oxfam registered charity number (202918)
- Particular colours, typefaces, pictures, etc.

Drafting your materials

When you're clear what you want to achieve and how you'll do it, you can get on with drafting your materials. You may want to come up with a number of different rough versions and share them with others for comment, before you put a lot of effort into the finished product. As you go along, keep checking that the designs you create match the criteria you discussed previously.

- It doesn't matter whether your materials are hand-made or produced on a computer, although using a word processor or design package will help you create a more professional-looking result.
- Contact the Activist Team for advice on use of the Oxfam logo, or access to an electronic version.
- Make sure that the materials are proof-read by a fresh pair of eyes. There's nothing worse than discovering errors when you've already produced multiple copies!
- Ask if any local printers will print your materials free or at reduced cost, as a contribution to Oxfam. Sometimes they will do this in return for advertising their name on the materials.

Above all, keep your materials bold, simple and to the point, for maximum impact.

Don't forget to tell us about the innovative ways you are campaigning, email active@oxfam.org.uk.