

Marino Strategies

Creating Effective Committees

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Committee Building Plan

Please review the principles and assessment scale below, and then follow these steps to make a committee building plan:

- Committee vision:
 - Define the goal of the committee. How does it support the campaign? How does it build community power?
 - What activities will the committee be responsible for?
 - What level of engagement will be needed for a successful committee?
 - Do you have some ideas about the skills or knowledge you want to train your committee?
- Identifying your base:
 - Make sure you have a list of all of the people you want to engage, including all the info you have about them
 - Combine the lists as needed.
- Assessing your strength:
 - Rate each member on your list based on their current level of engagement. See the assessment scale below.

¹ Please obtain permission to use beyond your organization from carrie@marinostrategies.org

- Create a “potential leader” column and mark x for who you want to prioritize for organizing.
- Working with leaders
 - Next step is to invite your leaders to join the committee and put the leaders into a group together.
 - Ask them to make a commitment to each other to do this work. This could include a customized committee agreement.

Key Principles

1. Encourage members to invite their co-workers/ friends/ family/ neighbors. People are more likely to attend and stay involved when they are invited by someone they know and trust.
2. Leaders build power when they make a commitment to one another to work together for their shared goal with an aligned strategy that they all take responsibility for achieving. Each leader should be called upon to make a commitment to learn the skills to organize and campaign, work through and overcome challenges, and be transparent and accountable to each other.
3. Committees are meant to bring people together to identify issues and strategically problem solve or create campaigns to bring about solutions. Use this time together to map out the issues that your leaders are dealing with and identify the decision makers on the issue. Support your leaders in discussing the issue and ways that we can work together to bring about change.
4. Ensure that you are focusing on the right issue(s), leader buy-in is extremely important to the committee’s success.
5. Support leaders in taking leadership roles in these spaces. Give everyone the space they need to contribute in ways they feel comfortable, while encouraging participation from everyone. Organizers and members alike should be devoted to monitoring the space to ensure that it remains safe and inclusive.
6. Ensure that your committee has a clear purpose and that all leaders involved understand what it is. The purpose and committee description should be written

down and accessible so that it constantly grounds us in the work that needs to be done.

7. The committee should participate in the development of the campaign plan in collaboration with staff and partners. They will need to be invested in the plan because they will fuel the campaign. The organizer needs to surface decisions within the committee and guide the committee on weighing options for adjusting strategy when opportunities arise or the terrain changes.
8. Ensure that the committee meetings are well run, there should be an agenda, group commitments, the meeting should start and end on time, there should be clarity of the decision making process and should always end with an action plan or next steps.
9. Assign roles for each committee, for example committee chair/ co chairs or small circle facilitator, timekeeper, secretary/note taker etc.
10. Ensure that committees are leader led and facilitated with strong support from organizers, this ensures that issues and campaign paths are organically generated from the base.
11. Be intentional about each committee member's developmental needs and provide the tools and support they need to succeed.
12. Utilize committee meetings to train leaders on core skills for organizing, advocacy, campaigns, actions. Regular meetings can be a great way to steadily prepare leaders for the fight they will have or are already engage in.

Assessment Scale

1 - Leader: A leader is a member that actively organizes to grow the membership and drive campaigns. They cover a base of members, take a leadership role in planning and facilitating actions, committee meetings, trainings and campaign events.

2 - Activist/Active Members : A member who consistently participates in actions, committees, events and trainings online and in person in a leadership capacity. They believe in what we do and assist in helping us be successful at expanding our reach. An activist is invested in the success of our organization, helps get our message out to others, participates in events but does not yet lead.

3 - Supporter/General Member : A supporter believes in the mission and goals of our organization and understands the importance of our organizing efforts. These individuals do not consistently attend meetings or events but stay connected to the organization.

4 - Network : New contacts or people who are not active.