

Campaign Academy: Leaders and Structures for Winning Campaigns

February 28, 2026





Campaign Academy

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Feedback on Feedback

Your Words

TODAY'S AGENDA



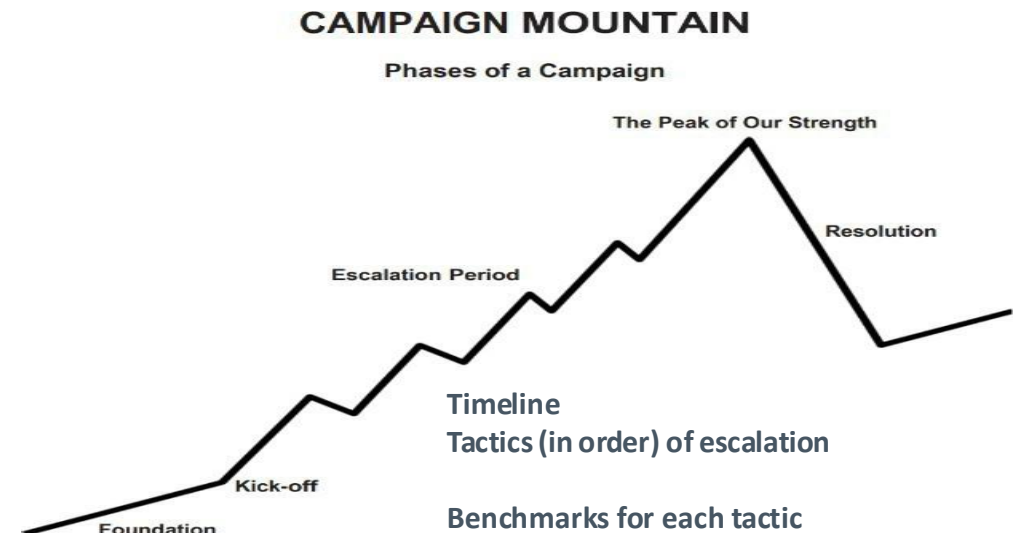
- 7:30-8:30 Breakfast
- 8:30-Noon
- 10:15-10:30 Break
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-4:30
- 2:30-2:45 Break
- 4:30-5:00 Networking and Adjourn

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STRUCTURES AND LEADERS



Centering Equity
Leadership Team
Problem and Issue Identification
Target and Demand
Power Analysis
Allies
Communication
Strategy
Tactics
Metrics



Apply to be a Campaign Lab Coach



Campaign
Coach

- Possess an organizing and leadership mindset
- Attends campaign coach training
- Coaches 1–2 local teams
- Holds coaching calls, with team 2 times a month
- Engages in peer problem solving and coaching
- Works with a mentor coach

Online Learning Opportunities



Online Learning Campaign Lab

Online Learning for Campaign Lab is an online system of courses specifically for Organizing Team Leads, Campaign Coaches, and Mentor Coaches within the Campaign Lab.

SHARE



In Person Opportunities



Coaching and Leading Winning Campaigns

June 20-23, 2025 and May 15-17, 2026

The Campaign Lab is a system of Affiliate Staff, Members, and Leaders networked to build power to win on issues that matter most. A focus is on a distributed model of Leadership and Coaching focused on building a culture for issue organizing. This requires a strong understanding of organizing and continually campaigning. It includes a shared analysis of how to win, issue identification, goal setting, strategic actions, distributed leadership, and data that informs a campaign's progress.

This NEA Center for Organizing training is designed to build skills around coaching and leading all aspects of a campaign cycle. Participants will learn how to help themselves and others:

- Develop core coaching skills that transform individual and team agency into action within an issue campaign
- Build strong leadership teams with defined boundaries and roles
- Develop skills around strategic planning, leadership tests, data collection, and narrative development.
- Move away from episodic mobilization of the already engaged – to the deeper work of moving people to “our” side.



Dreaming of 2030

Eric

Dreaming about 2030



ON YOUR OWN FIRST

What do you see, hear,
and feel in this future?

What's one win you're most
proud of?

What did it take to get
here?

THEN – SHARE
WITH YOUR TEAM



TEAM TIME MAKING THE DREAM REAL

2030 is not a fantasy —
it's a destination. Every
organizing conversation,
every contract fight, every
rally gets us closer.

Finish this statement

We joined the campaign
lab so that we can win
_____ by 2030.



Key Points

- › Shared dreams can be achieved with intentional and strategic actions.
- › Strong Leadership teams Inspire hope, deepen commitment, and align their people around a shared vision





Problem and Issue

Zac



You will be working with
your states.
Sit accordingly

PROBLEMS & ISSUE



- **Campaigns** start with issues that people have value-based solidarity around.
- An *issue* is a slice of a workplace *problem*.
 - Often a *problem* can have different *issues* depending on the people's perspective
- It is **KEY** to get enough input on what the *issues* are that make up the *problem* so that YOU do not drive the solution.
- Investigating the issue is necessary but not sufficient – we also need to identify workers' **SHARED** values
 - **WHY** is this an issue?
 - **WHY** do you want to fix this?

PROBLEM vs. ISSUE

A problem is the whole pie. Problems are vast, complex, and entrenched.

When we try to tackle a problem, we reinforce the hopelessness of the situation. We are trying to take on the full pie all at once.



Issues are the pieces of the pie. It's a small chunk of the larger problem that we can make progress on, and in turn we are slowly taking on the full problem over time.

Issue

An ***issue*** is a slice of the larger problem that is manageable and solvable.



PROBLEM

vs.

ISSUE



Values

Values are fundamental beliefs that dictate behavior

Ideally, Unions advance the welfare of all members.

They are based on the universal ideal of human rights, the idea of justice, progress, and betterment of self and of society.

Through shared values, members build solidarity and commit to active participation in the labor movement.

Shared values transform individual members into part of something larger than themselves.

Some Union Values

Fairness, honesty/integrity, responsibility, compassion/empathy, safety, health, generosity, hard work/responsibility, community, freedom, democracy, binding contracts, equality, opportunity, respect, stability/security, unity, quality work, justice, collective action, dignity/respect, charity/community service, and due process.

How to Link Issues and Values

Investigating member issues is necessary but not sufficient – we also need to identify workers' **SHARED** values –

WHY is this an issue?

WHY do you want to fix this?



EXAMPLES- Problems to Issues + Values

VALUES – Public Schools should be safe, equitable, and inclusive learning and working environments for all people.

PROBLEM -Our school is hostile to LGBTQ+ staff and students

- **Issue Cut** – There are no gender inclusive bathrooms and/or transgender students and staff are forced to use the wrong restroom.

PROBLEM - Our school reinforces racism by silencing protestors

- **Issue Cut**– We need to stop law enforcement from arresting students and staff for exercising their Constitutional rights.

TEAM WORK – The Problems

Look back at your Villains list. List the **problems** that your team wants to improve – these are BIG

For each of the problems you identify – try to think what the values are that are behind WHY you see this as a problem.

Example Problem – We want quality health care for everyone

Values behind wanting to fix this – equity, fairness, dignity

List your problems and values on your charts.

Key Points



We listen for the values as
talk about these problems.

This is how we build
solidarity.

TEAM WORK – Problems into Issues

Example Problem – We want quality health care for everyone

Values behind wanting to fix this – equity, fairness, dignity

Possible Issues –

Not enough providers in our rural system

Values – access and equity

Drugs are not affordable

Values – fairness and access

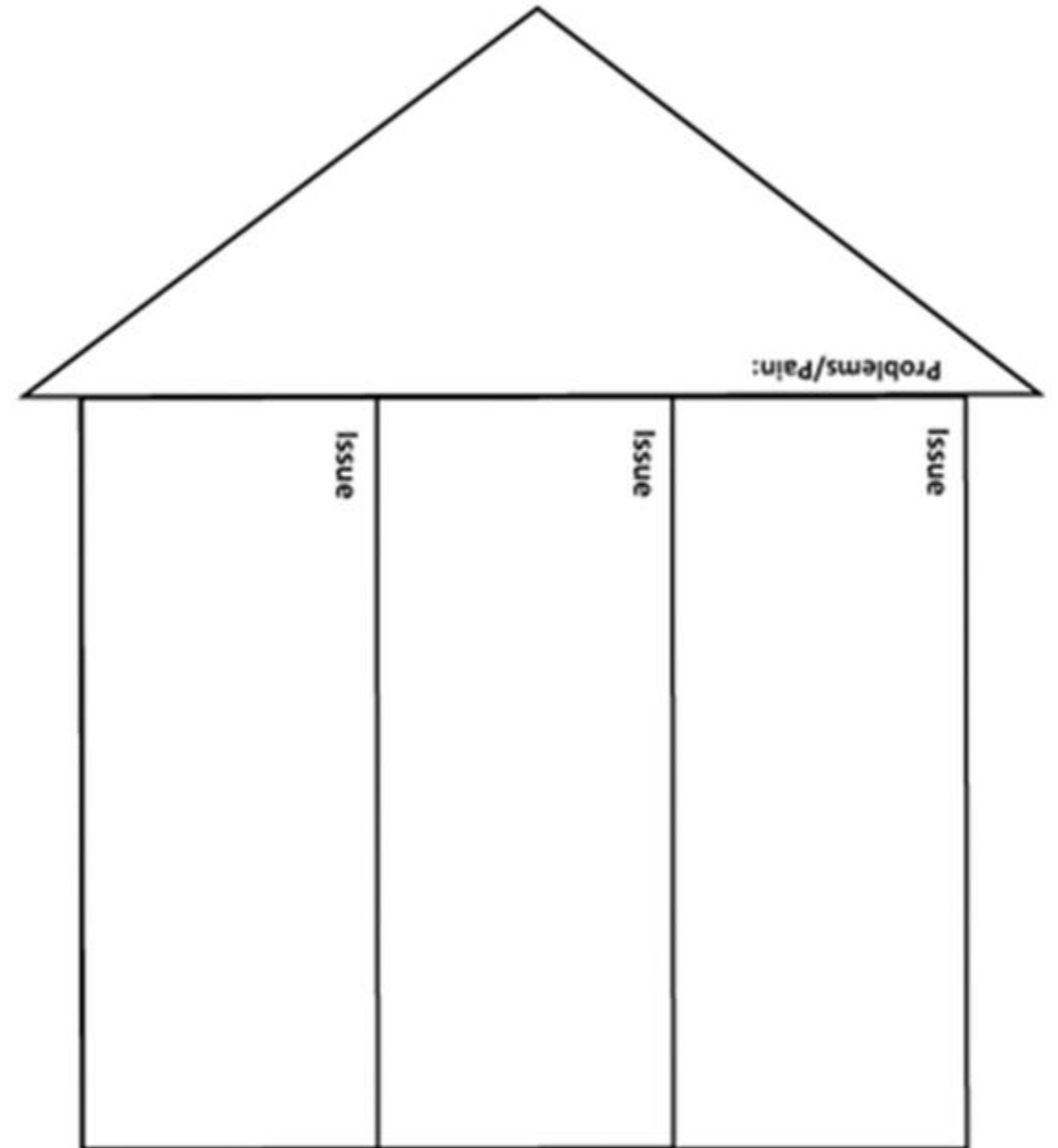
No coverage for home health options

Values – equity and dignity

Pick ONE problem and cut into issues on your charts.

Issues are the small(er) actionable pieces that contribute to the larger problem. By asking why is this an issue you can uncover values.

(Page 19)



Assessing Our Issues

☐ Widely felt and/or deeply felt.

- The pain can be felt by just one, but the injustice of that pain is shared by many.
- The pain AND the injustice of that pain is felt by many.

☐ Winnable.

☐ Builds the union and builds leaders.

☐ Has a connection to students and the public.

Issue Criteria Checklist

Will the Issue...	Issue #1	Issue #2	Issue #3
1. Result in a real improvement in people's lives?			
2. Give people a sense of their own power?			
3. Alter the relations of power?			
4. Be worthwhile?			
5. Be winnable?			
6. Be widely felt?			
7. Be deeply felt?			
8. Be easy to understand?			
9. Have a clear target?			
10. Have a clear timeframe that works for you?			
11. Be non-divisive?			
12. Build leadership?			
13. Set your organization up for the next campaign?			
14. Increase membership?			
15. Be consistent with your values and vision?			
16.			
TOTALS			

Key Points



Problems are big conditions of injustice

Issues are the smaller member identified components that makeup the problem

Issues indicate a path to action

Values build a relatable why across people experiencing the pain of the problem

We intentionally work to connect members around issues and values to build solidarity

BREAK





Internal or External

Katie

What is the difference between and internal and external campaign?



Internal Campaign - Growth

Goal: To increase member engagement, leadership development, structural capacity, and activist participation.

Focus: Member-to-member communication, empowering members to address issues together, and breaking down the perception of the union as a distant service provider.

Activities: Training existing members to become leaders and activists, conducting member education, and building strong committees to ensure member involvement in union activities.



External Campaigns - Strength



Goal: To win specific demands for members and partners.

Focus: Active participation of rank and file members and partners, building towards broader and bigger coalitions

Activities: Issue identification, escalating and public actions, strategic pressuring

Internal or External?



How do we actually get eggs in your basket?

Email blast, or?

Survey blast, or?

Social Media, or ?

Hustle, or ?

Stuff a mailbox, or ?

That is why 1:10



If there was a crisis, how prepared is your state caucus?



Guided Group activity

1. Write one metric that would indicate you are winning the goal of your issue.



Guided Group activity

2. Given your current home state's caucus structure, do you think you would be able to get more than 50% of your state's caucus members to take a small action such as signing an online petition or showing up to a rally? If yes, you are ready for an external campaign.



Guided Group activity

3. For the rest of us, how do we get there? Where do you even start? Make a list of home state's caucus members or other people.

Start with your most committed and end with your “best worst” (people that at least have some sign of being active.)



Guided Group activity

p.13-16

4. Take some time to brainstorm how you might build this structure; refer to page 15 to help you with ideas. Put your ideas on your chart paper, and add questions you need to answer to put your plan in place.



Has your answer to this changed?
If there was a crisis, how prepared is your state caucus?



Key Points



- › Internal campaigns build the power to win external campaigns.
- › External campaigns engage your constituents and bring in potential members and community support.
- › Internal and external organizing feed each other and are how locals build power.
- › Strategic campaigns combine multiple cycles of internal and external organizing to win on multiple issues towards long term strategic goals, such as achieving your vision for public schools.



Demand, Win, Target

Ben

A Target is...

The person with the power to give you what you are demanding.

This person

- . Has a name
- . Has a face
- . Has an address



TEAMWORK

Return to Your Problem and Issue Charts

Who are the Potential Targets for the PROBLEM and your Issues?

Remember our Definition of Target



Demand

“Hey **TARGET**,
we demand **ACTION**
because **HARM or IMPACT!**”

Demand:

Hey Dean Sam: We demand gender affirming bathrooms in every building because all students and faculty need to feel safe and included in our schools. ”

Demands Should Be...

- › Measurable – did the Target do the thing
- › Achievable – It is possible for the Target to do the thing

TEAM WORK – Demand

Use your Issue and Target.

Draft at least one demand of your Target that resolves your issue and is linked to YOUR VALUES

Key Points



- › A powerful demand makes clear who has the power to make the change that's needed
- › We can only build a powerful demand when we have taken the steps to accurately identify the issue and determine who has the power to create change



LUNCH



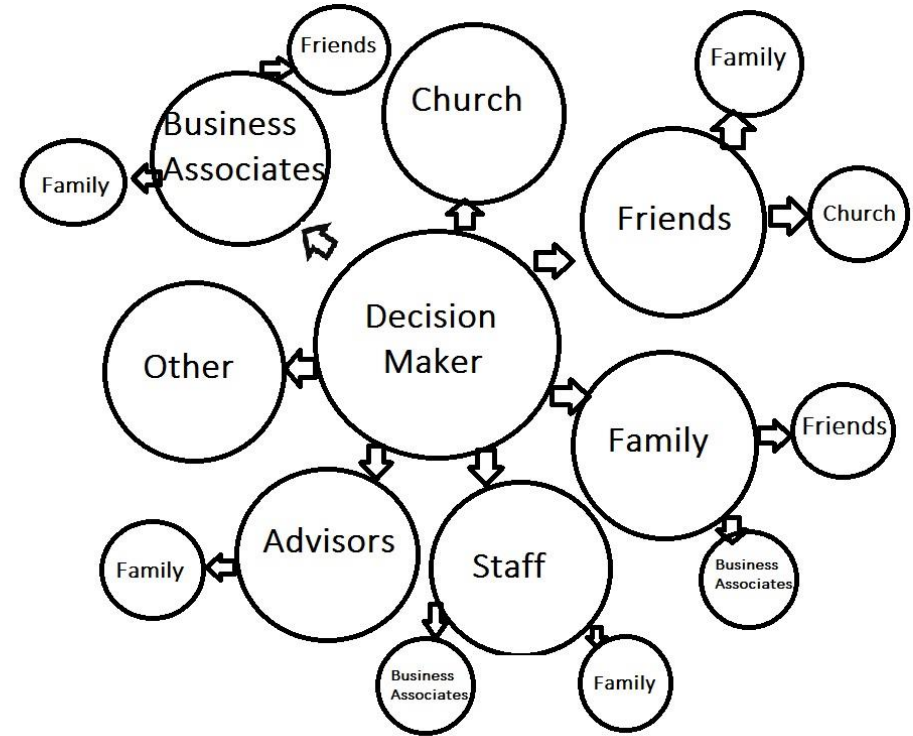
Dossier of Target

Zac

Questions to ask when building a Power Map

- › Who make decisions?
- › Who has formal authority?
- › Who has informal influence?
- › How are they all connected?

This helps us identify the pathways to influence the decision-maker.



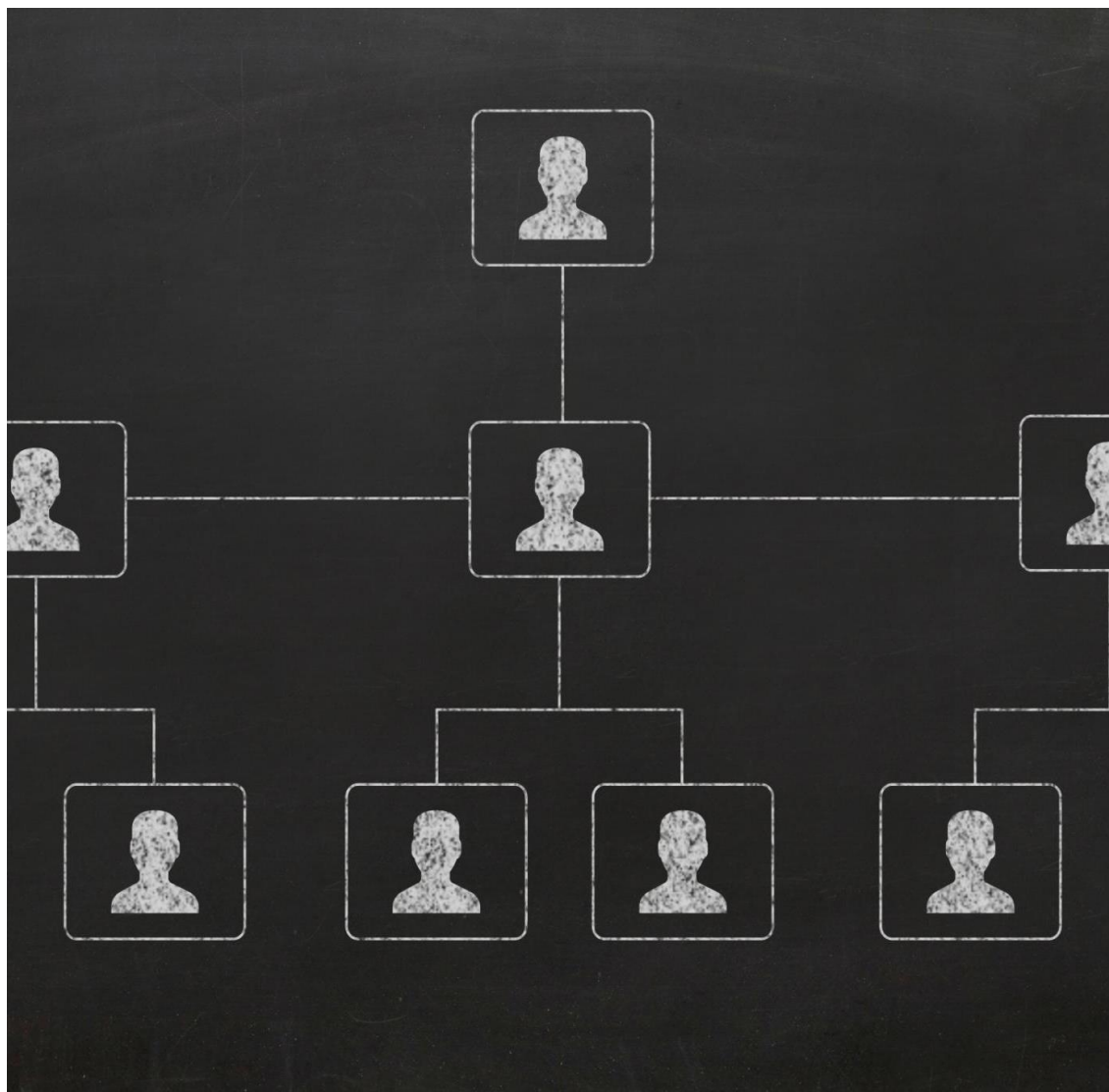
Research – it's a powerful tool

- › It should be strategic, targeted, and relentless.
- › We need to know who holds the power and how they use it.
- › It's about finding leverage, and understanding what makes our target tick and how we can make them move



p.31

- 



Institutional Power & Influence

Mapping Power Structures

Identify who holds decision-making authority over staffing, budgets, curriculum, and safety within the institution.

Formal vs Informal Influence

Recognize the difference between **official authority** and **informal influence** to locate real decision-makers effectively.

Targeting Campaign Strategies

Use insights about power dynamics to focus campaigns on the right targets and tailor strategies accordingly.

Funding & Financial Ties

Identifying Funding Sources

Understanding who funds programs reveals priorities and potential conflicts of interest in decision-making.

Analyzing Financial Relationships

Financial ties highlight loyalty, pressure points, and reveal hidden agendas impacting leadership.

Leveraging Financial Insights

Organizers use funding analysis to uncover leverage points and build effective narratives for influence.



Policy History & Public Statements

A close-up photograph of a fountain pen with a gold-colored nib and a black barrel. The pen is positioned diagonally, having just finished writing the word "Publication" in a bold, black, cursive script on a white, slightly textured surface. The word is slanted upwards from left to right. The pen's nib is visible at the end of the word.

Tracking Policy Decisions

Analyzing policies pushed helps understand impact on educators and students and anticipate future moves.

Monitoring Public Statements

Reviewing statements from forums and interviews reveals decision-makers' positions and accountability.

Crafting Targeted Messaging

Understanding history and statements enables tailored campaigns that anticipate resistance and build credibility.

Highlighting Inconsistencies

Pointing out contradictions and failures strengthens campaign urgency and public trust.



Community Impact & Demographics

Affected Communities

Understanding which communities are served or underserved guides inclusive and effective decision-making.

Demographic Factors

Analyzing race, income, language, housing, and education levels reveals social and economic context.

Mobilizing and Outreach

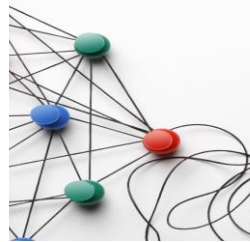
Demographic insights help identify allies and design outreach strategies to mobilize communities effectively.

Local Institutions & Networks



Institutions as Power Centers

Institutions like churches and schools hold significant influence and shape local power dynamics.



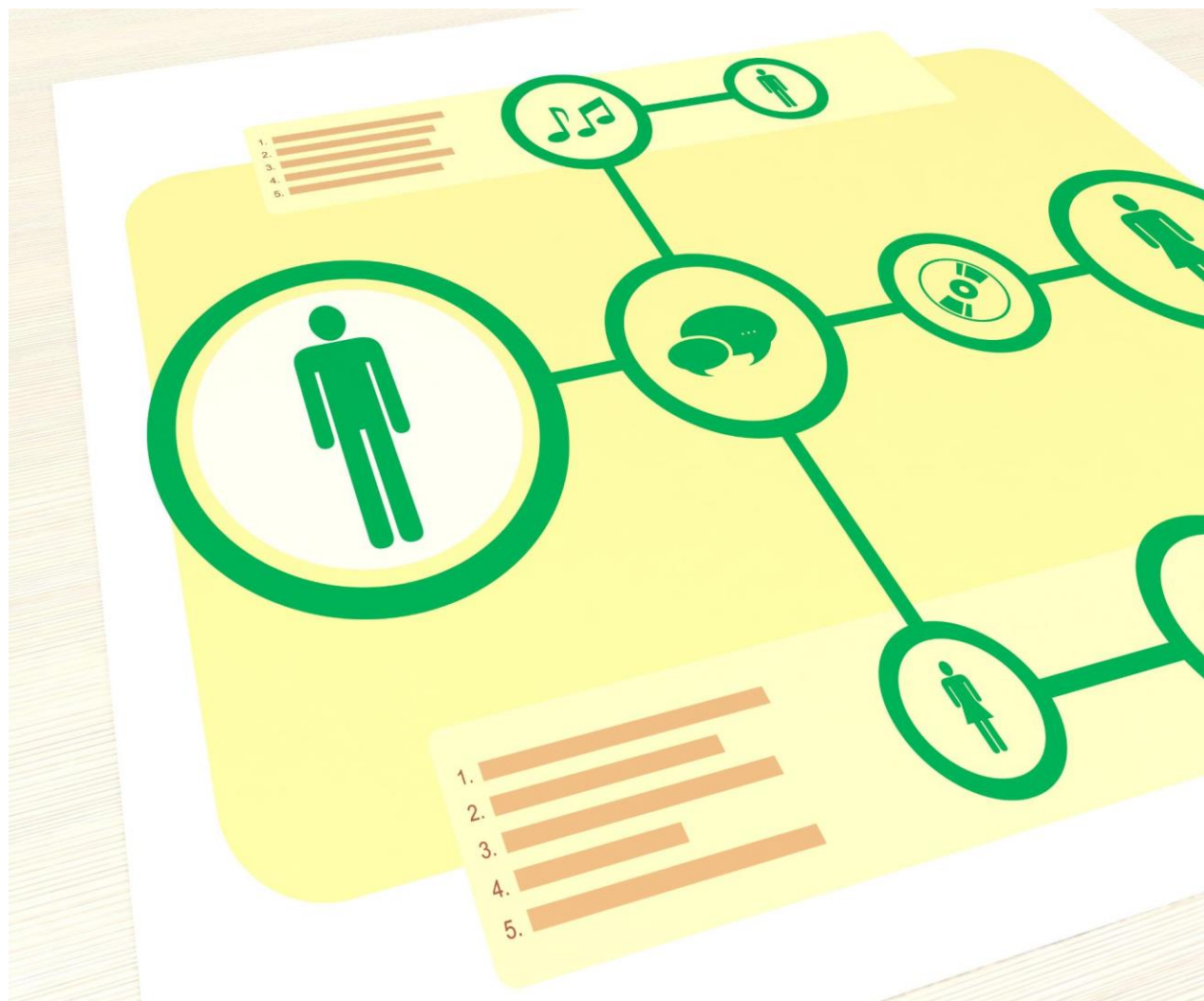
Identifying Allies and Opponents

Mapping which groups support or oppose decision-makers reveals strategic allies and opposition.



Strategic Coalition-Building

Understanding networks uncovers pressure points and opportunities to build coalitions for greater impact.



Personal Background & Affiliations

Understanding Personal Background

Researching a person's history reveals motivations and key factors beyond their professional role.

Exploring Affiliations

Identifying boards and organizations linked to the person highlights their networks and influence.

Humanizing Through Research

Personal research uncovers hidden motivations and aids storytelling to engage public opinion effectively.



Local Intel & Relationships

Continuous Communication

Always talk to a variety of people to gather real stories and understand dynamics deeply.

Informal Intelligence Gathering

Informal intel fills gaps left by formal research, providing context and actionable insights.

Building Trust

Sustaining long-term efforts depends on building trust and maintaining relationships.

Gallery Walk – pages 31 & 32

With your group, identify the research actions that would need to be done in this category.

Be ready to discuss the following:

- › What surprised you most about the information you will need to research?
- › Which section of the handout felt most useful or revealing?
- › Did you discover any gaps in your current understanding of local power structures?

Key Points



When we know our target,
we know how to organize.



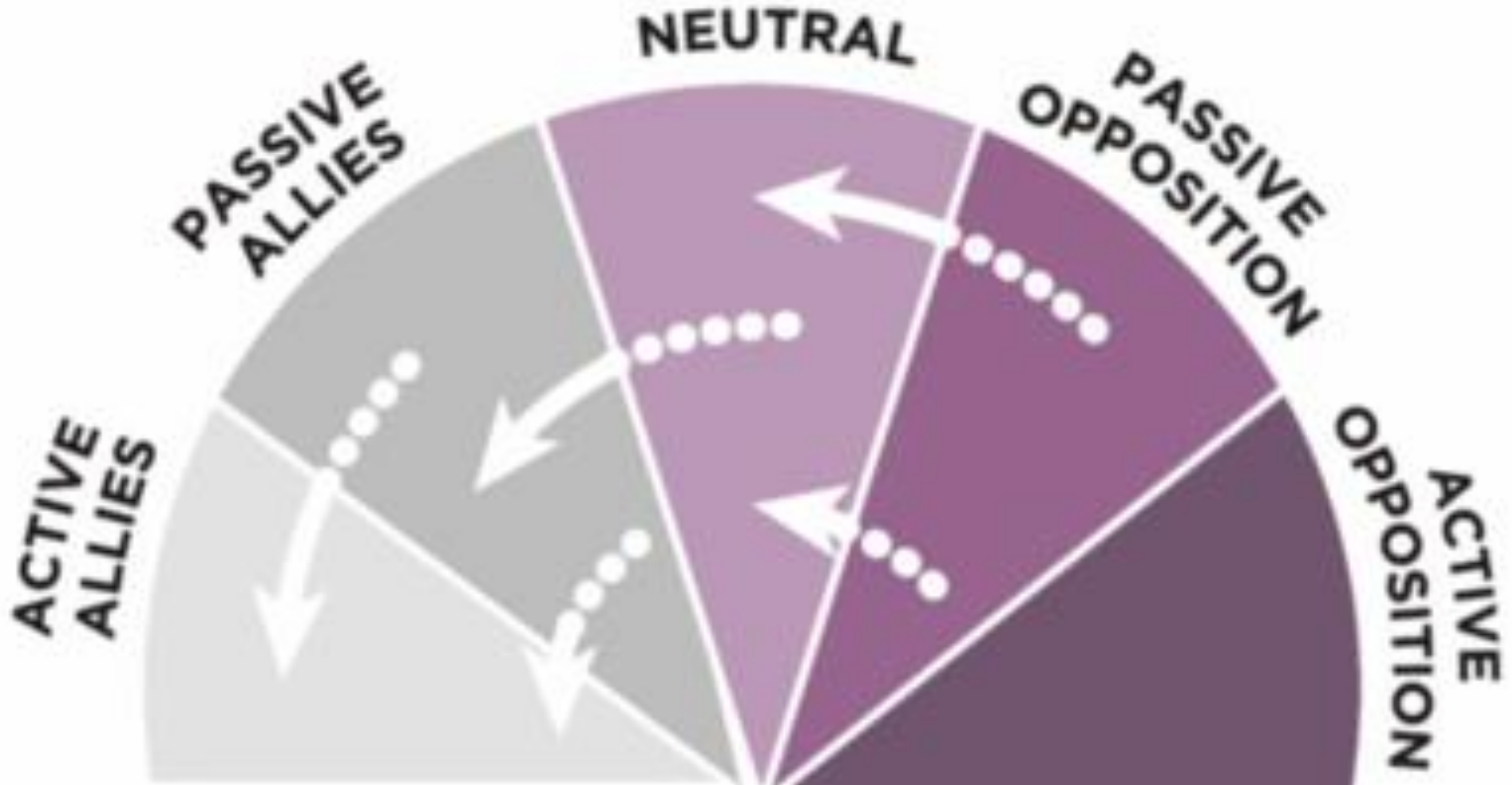
Spectrum of Allies

Katie

Keep it in mind...

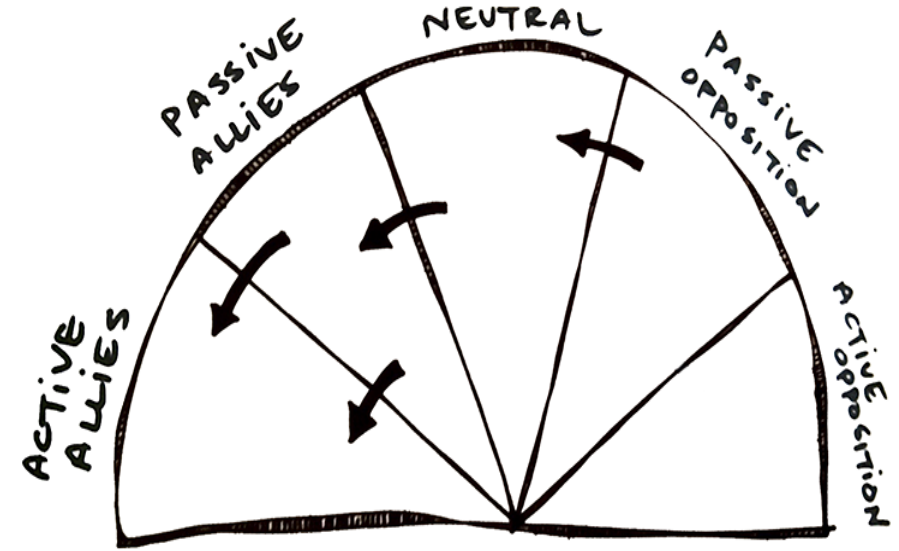
- › If campaigns put people at the center of solving the problems they are experiencing...
- › Then understanding the relationship people have with the win you seek is essential

Spectrum of Allies- page 29-30



Spectrum of Allies

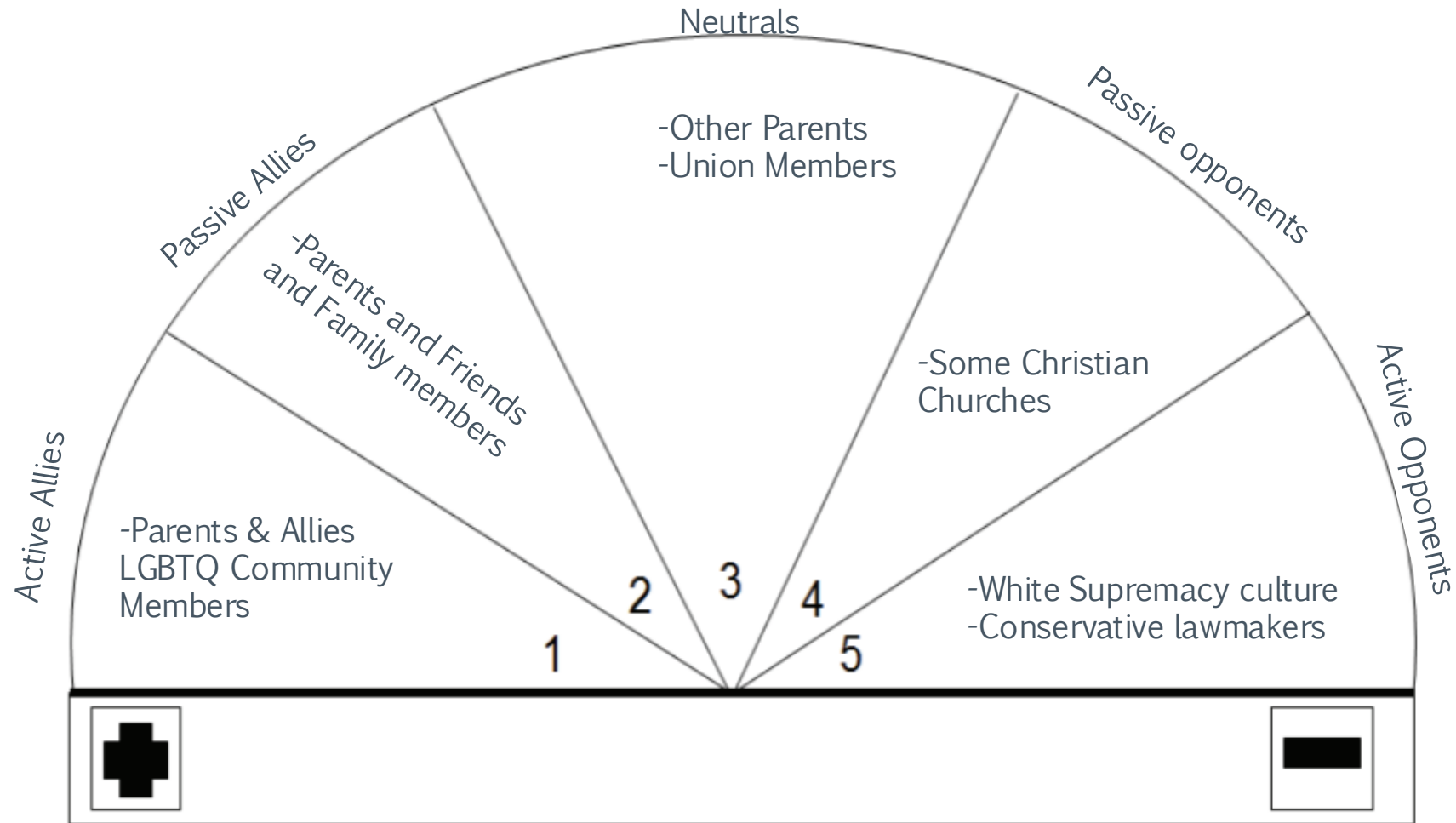
1. Active allies: people who agree with you & are organizing alongside you
2. Passive allies: people who agree but aren't doing anything about it (yet!)
3. Neutrals: people who aren't sure, or are unengaged (they might just not know about you yet)
4. Passive opponents: people who disagree, but aren't trying to stop you
5. Active opponents: people who have done something to prevent you from reaching your goal



An example from history – PFLAG



Spectrum of Allies Example



Key Points



- › It is only necessary to move some or all of the pie wedges one step in your direction.
- › If we shift each wedge one step, we are likely to win, even if the hardliners on the opponent's side don't budge.

Messaging is Movement-Building

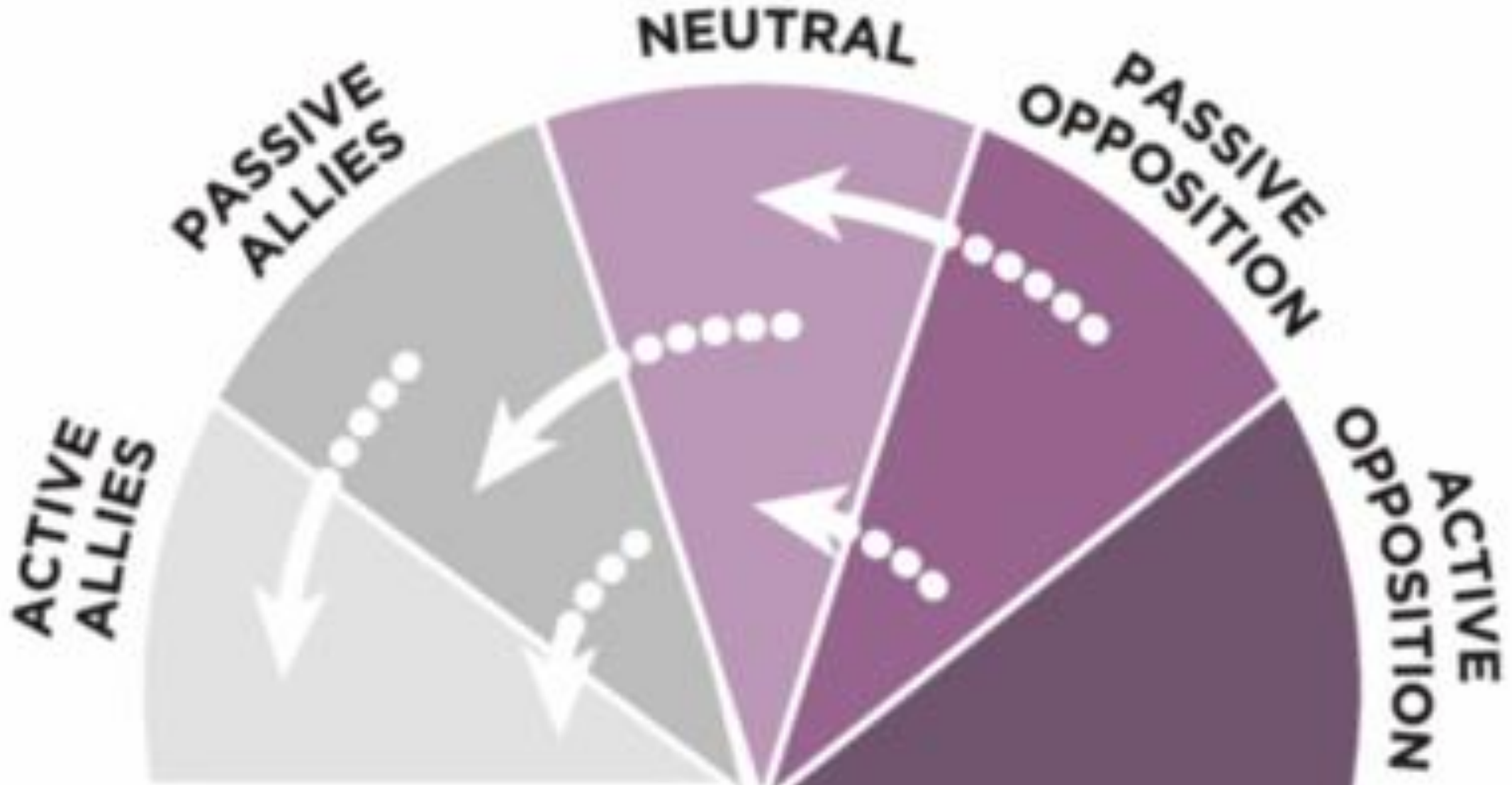
- › Messaging isn't about arguing—it's about inviting.
- › Focus determines who gets included and who is left out.
- › Equity-centered messaging helps build power with, not for.



Who Are You Talking To?

Spectrum	Needs Messaging That...
Active Allies	Deepens commitment
Passive Allies	Invites low-risk engagement
Neutrals	Frames values alignment
Passive Opponents	De-escalates with dignity
Active Opponents	Not the focus but you gotta say something and it needs to make sense

Campaign Team Practice: Spectrum of Allies- p. 30



Elevator pitch time



Key Points



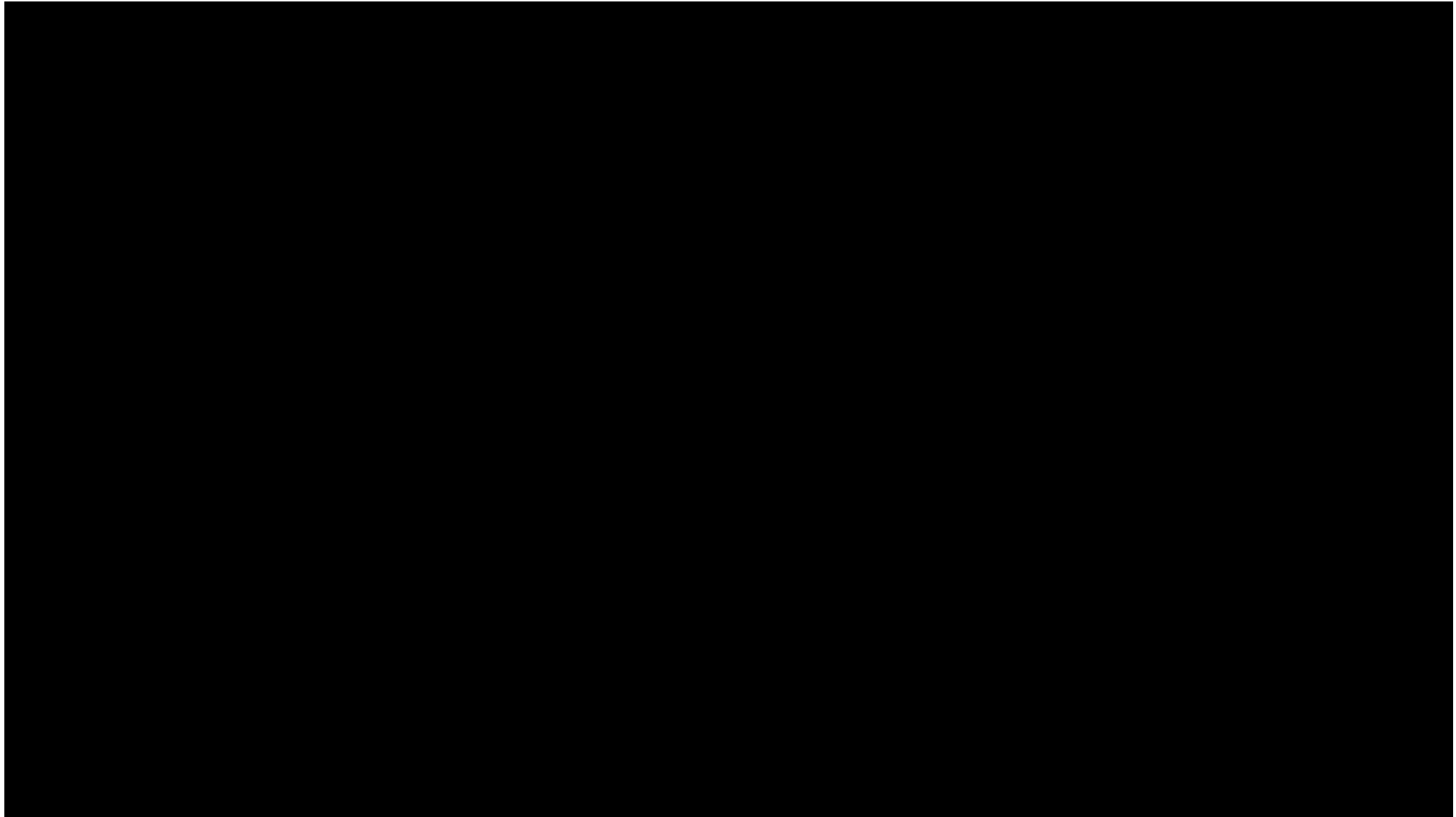
- › Equity means naming nuance - be specific, be inclusive
- › Don't center your opponent - build around your base
- › Good messaging connects and activates people



Organizer Math: Building Exponential Power

Ben

How can I make a difference?



DUNBAR'S NUMBER : 150

TYPICAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WE CAN KEEP TRACK OF AND
CONSIDER PART OF OUR ONGOING SOCIAL NETWORK

150
TRIBE

50
CLAN

15
SUPER
FAMILY

5
CLOSE
FRIENDS

← WEAKER TIES → MORE INVESTMENT IN RELATIONSHIP →

DANG! NOW,
WHAT WAS THEIR
NAME AGAIN?



Why do we care about Dunbar's Numbers? Pages 33-36

Stable - Relationship

Connections

“Driver”
Leaders

Natural
Leaders

Developing
Leaders

Engaged
Members

Aware
Members

Disengaged
Members -
Supporters

5 🐵

15 🐵

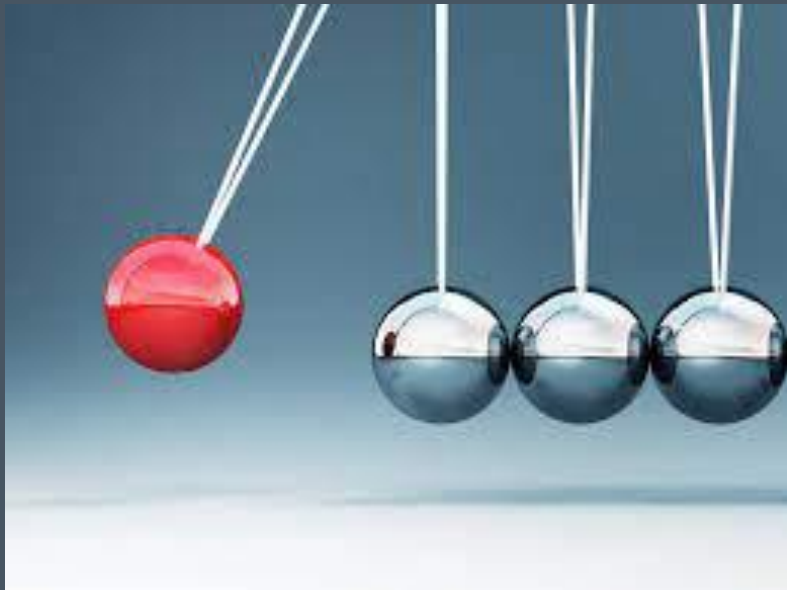
50 🐵

150 🐵

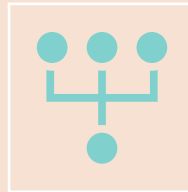
500 🐵

1500 🐵

THE SCHOOLS EVERYONE DESERVES CAMPAIGN PAGE 37



Crisis: Board announced cuts (15 social workers, class size increase, salary freeze).



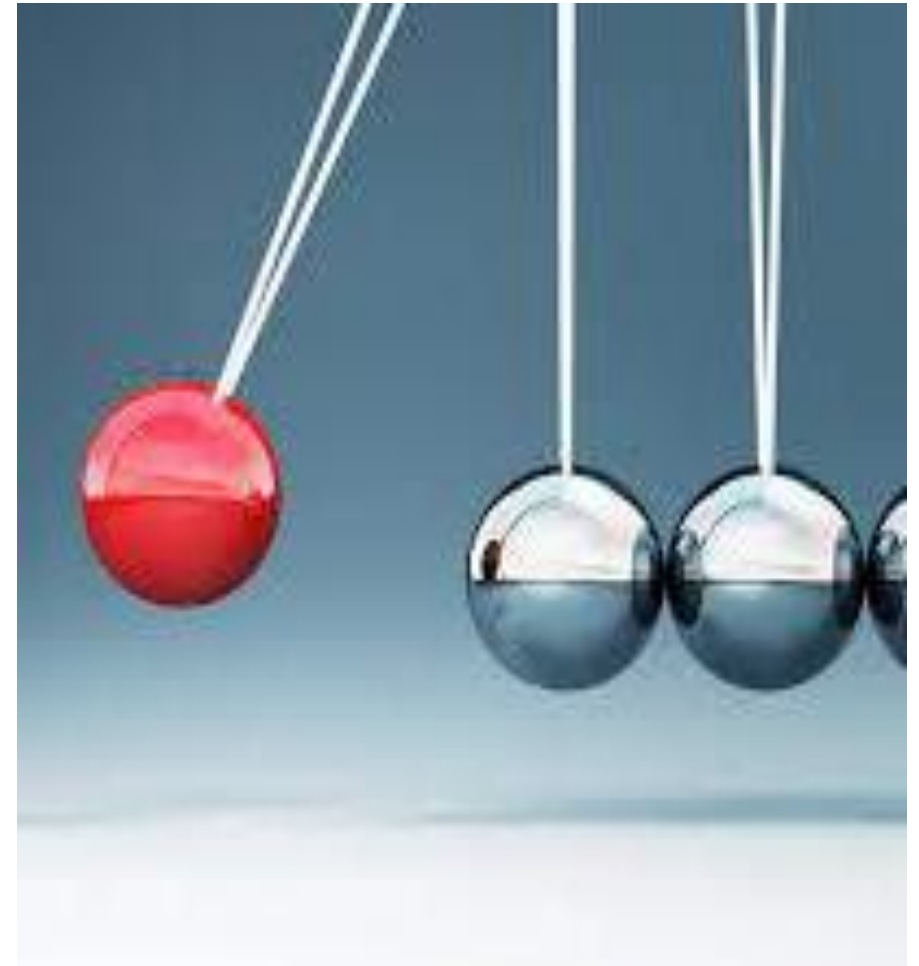
Union's Shift: From service model
→ organizing model using
Bargaining for the Common Good
(BCG).



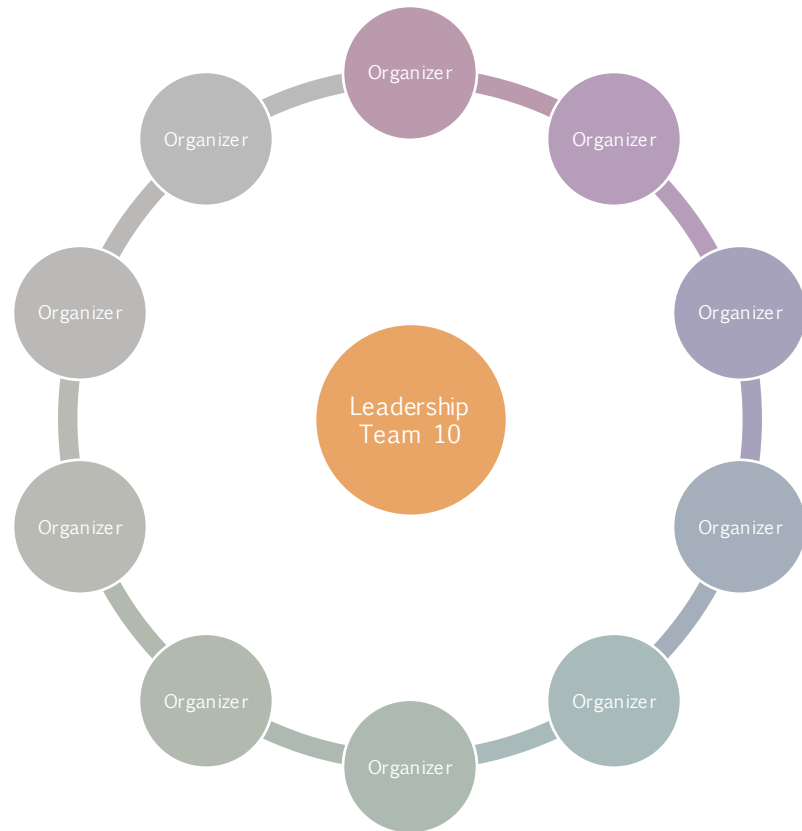
Victory Metric: 5,000 public pledges.

Team Work Time

- › At your table, answer the Debrief Questions in the Case Study (p. 46-47)
 - How did framing demands as Common Good issues change the campaign's reach & impact?
 - What were the key turning points in the campaign that shifted power toward the union?
 - Why was achieving 92% internal unity before going public critical for success?
 - How did the coalition with parents, students, and community groups amplify the union's leverage?
- › Use all of the information included in pages 37-46 to answer the questions
- › Be ready to report out.



Phase 1 – Internal Unity (The Spark)- p. 40



- › 10 Core Leaders → 150 organizers (10% of union).
- › Internal test: 92% participation in 'Green for Harmony Day'.



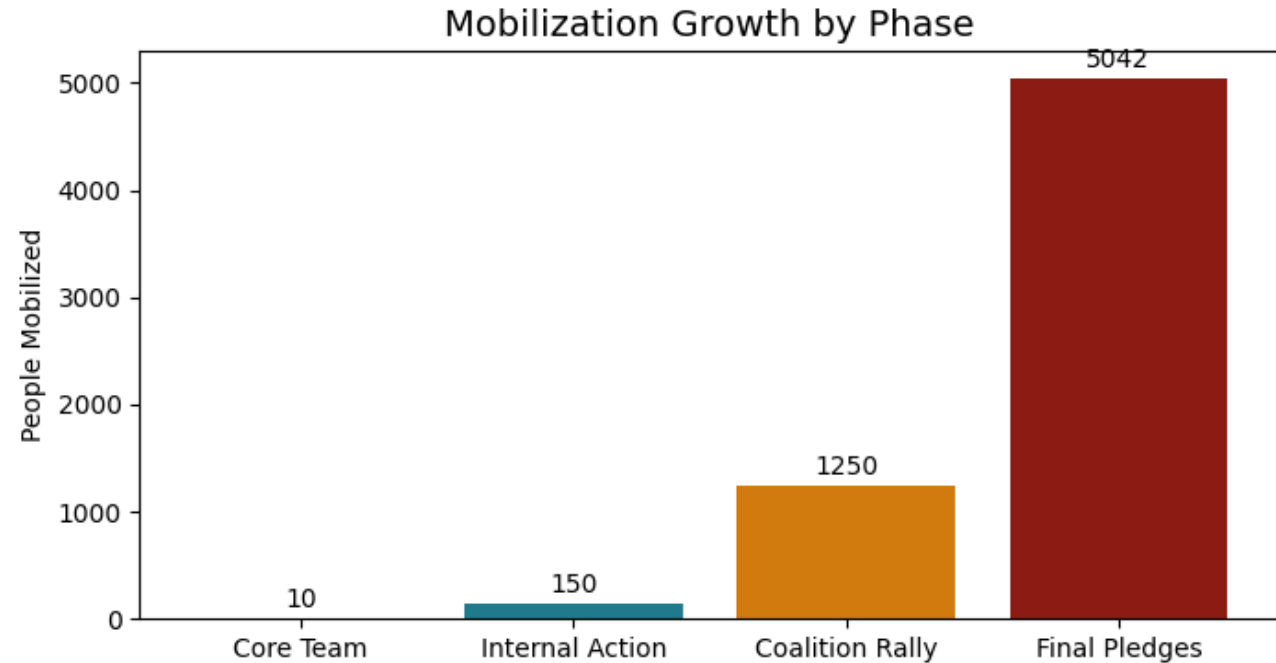
Phase 2 – External Coalition (The Multiplier)- p. 41

- › 50 external organizers recruited (parents, students, clergy).
- › Rally: 1,250 attendees (60% non-union).



Final Phase – The Confrontation (Victory) - p.41-42

- › 5,042 pledges + 94% strike vote.
- › Board rescinded cuts.

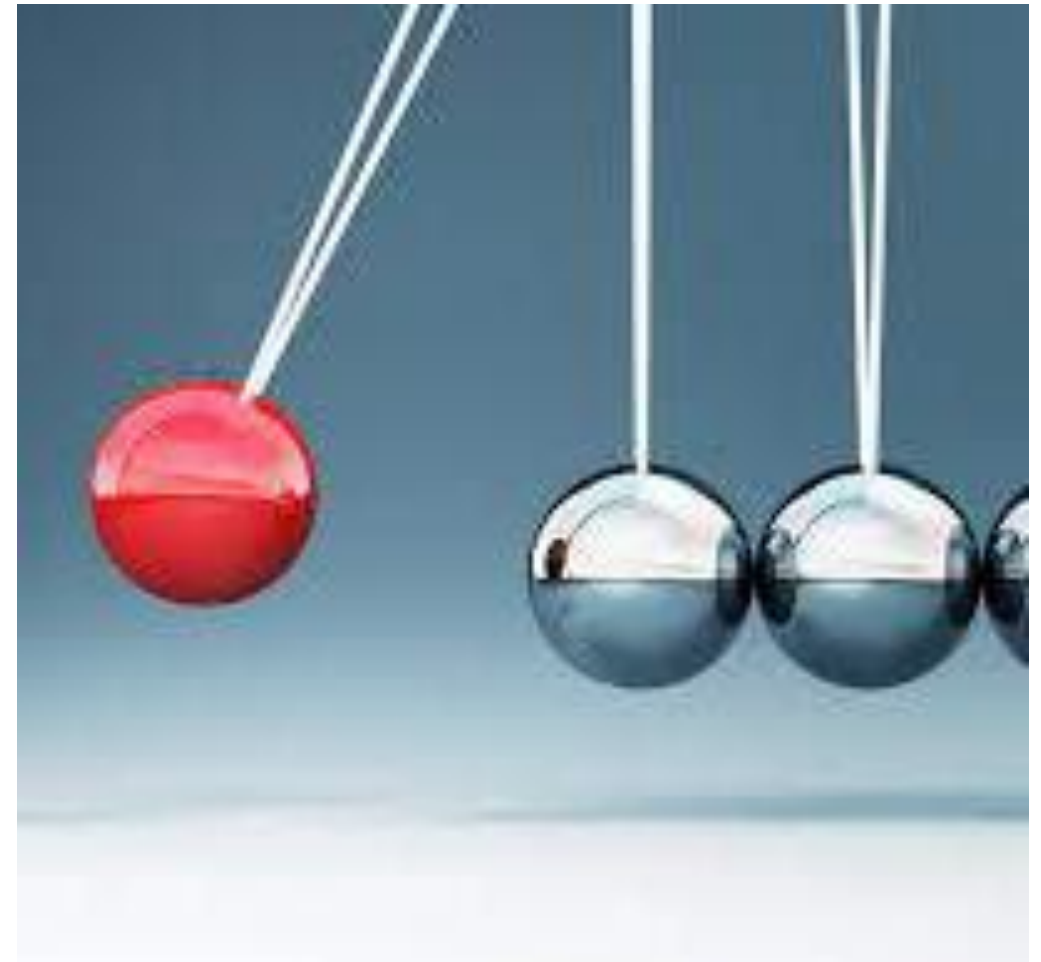


Action Checklist for Organizers- page 47

Identify	Identify 10% organizers.
Test	Test structure with measurable asks.
Frame	Frame demands as Common Good.
Build	Build coalition.
Track	Track power metrics.

Team Work Time

- › As a Team, complete the Planning Checklist for your own campaign (p. 47)
- › Be ready to report out



Key Points:



- Power is not what you have, but what you can mobilize *because* you have working structures.
- Organizing success depends on measurable commitment, not just membership size.

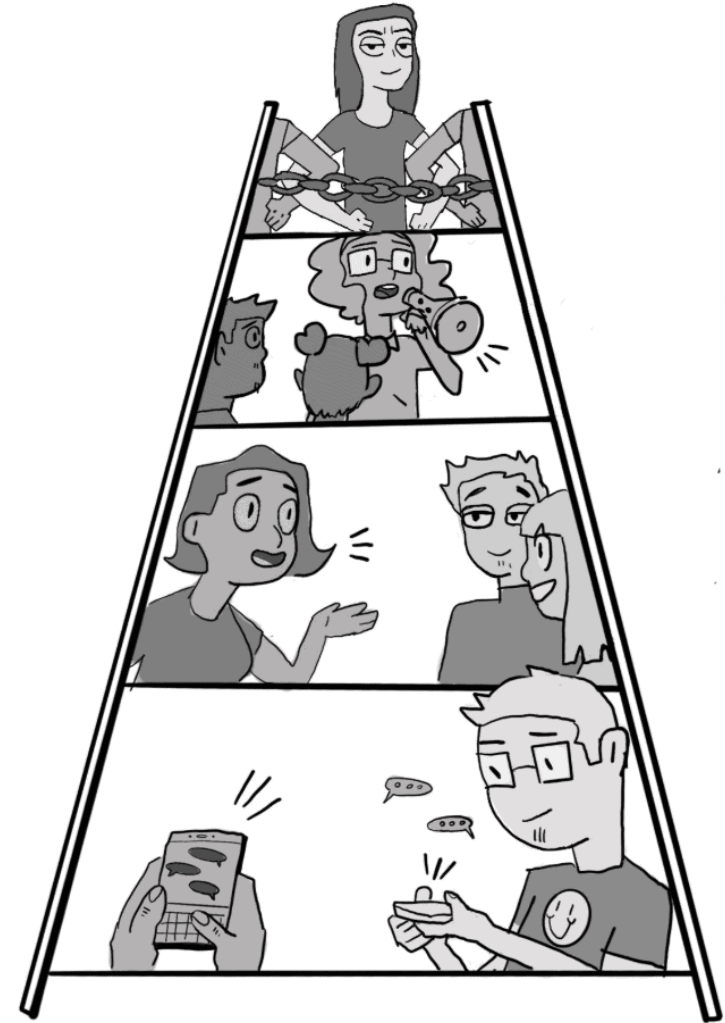


Ladder of Engagement

Dr. Taraja

A Strategic Ladder for Union Campaigns

LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT



What is the Ladder of Engagement?

A framework to help union leaders **activate and elevate member participation** through a series of intentional steps.

Each step **builds trust, capacity, and ownership**—turning passive members into powerful advocates and leaders.

Steps to Solidarity

Campaign Ladder of Engagement



5 Reaching the Top

Creating Opportunities for Others to Climb



4 Standing Steady

Holding Space for Collective Voice

3 Climbing with Purpose

Building Strength Through Action



2 Gripping the First Rung

Taking Hold of Shared Purpose



1 Spotting the Ladder

Recognizing the Path

Step 1: Spotting the Ladder – *Recognizing the Path to Collective Power*

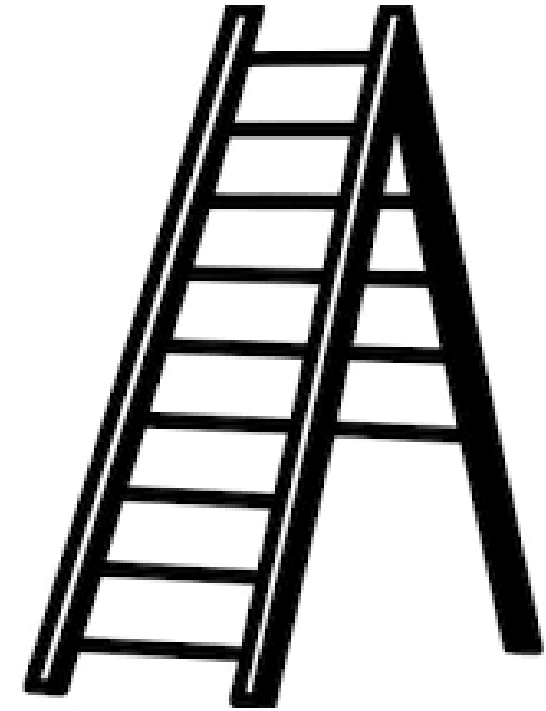
Objective: Introduce the campaign and spark initial interest.

Tactics:

- Send targeted emails or texts with campaign goals and relevance to educators.
- Share compelling stories or visuals on social media.
- Host informal info sessions or coffee chats at school sites.

Leadership Focus:

- Equip building reps and site leaders with talking points and flyers.
- Use warm, inclusive language that affirms educators' values and concerns.



Step 2: Gripping the First Rung – *Taking Hold of Shared Purpose*

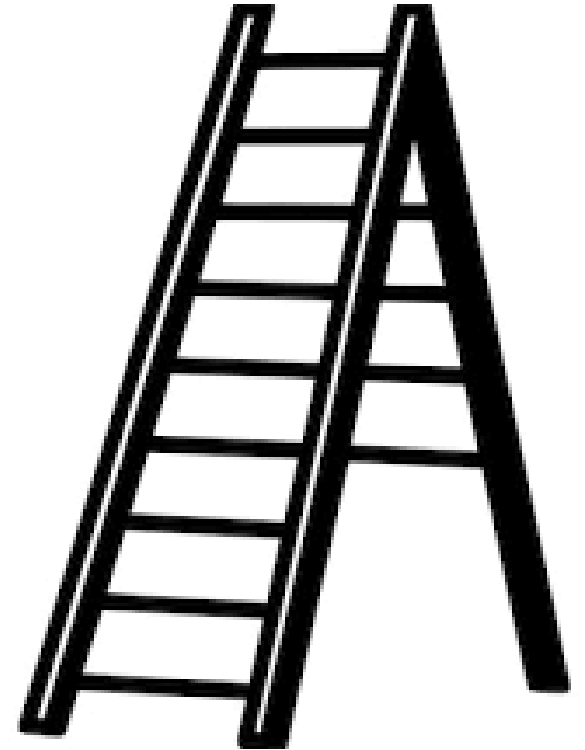
Objective: Encourage members to express curiosity and take a first step.

Tactics:

- Invite members to sign a petition or pledge of support.
- Conduct short surveys to gather input and build buy-in.
- Offer low-barrier opportunities to attend virtual briefings or town halls.

Leadership Focus:

- Track engagement and follow up personally.
- Celebrate participation publicly to build momentum.



Step 3: Climbing with Purpose – *Building Strength Through Action*

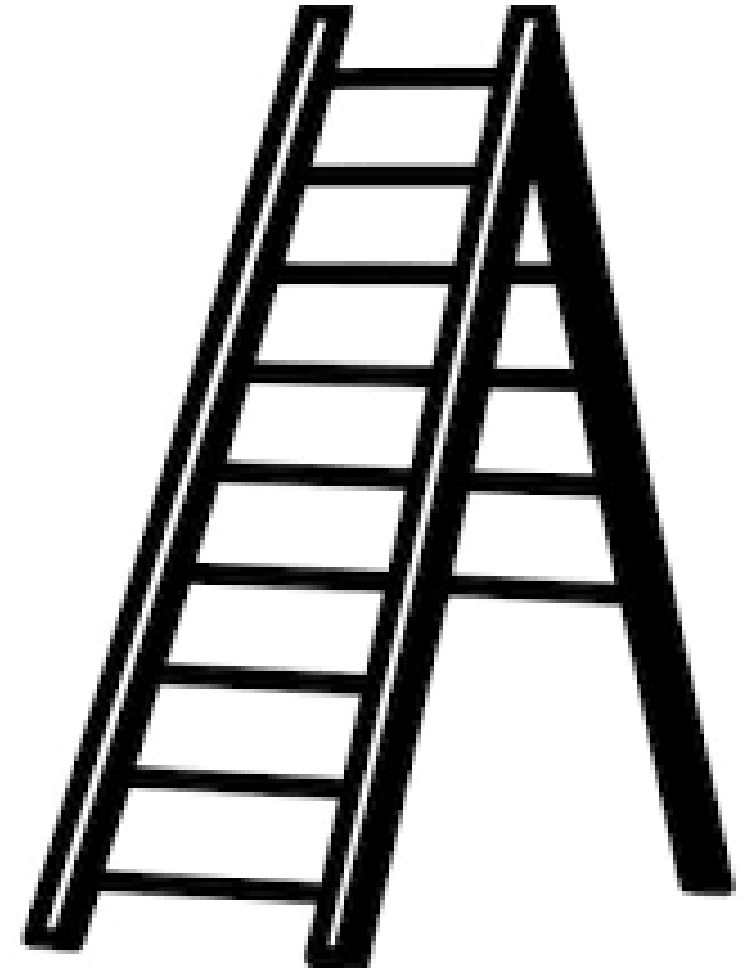
Objective: Move members from passive support to active involvement.

Tactics:

- Recruit volunteers for canvassing, phone banking, or event support.
- Form working groups around specific campaign issues (e.g., class size, funding).
- Host action nights or community forums.

Leadership Focus:

- Provide clear roles, training, and support.
- Recognize contributions and foster team spirit.



Step 4: Standing Steady – *Holding Space for Collective Voice*

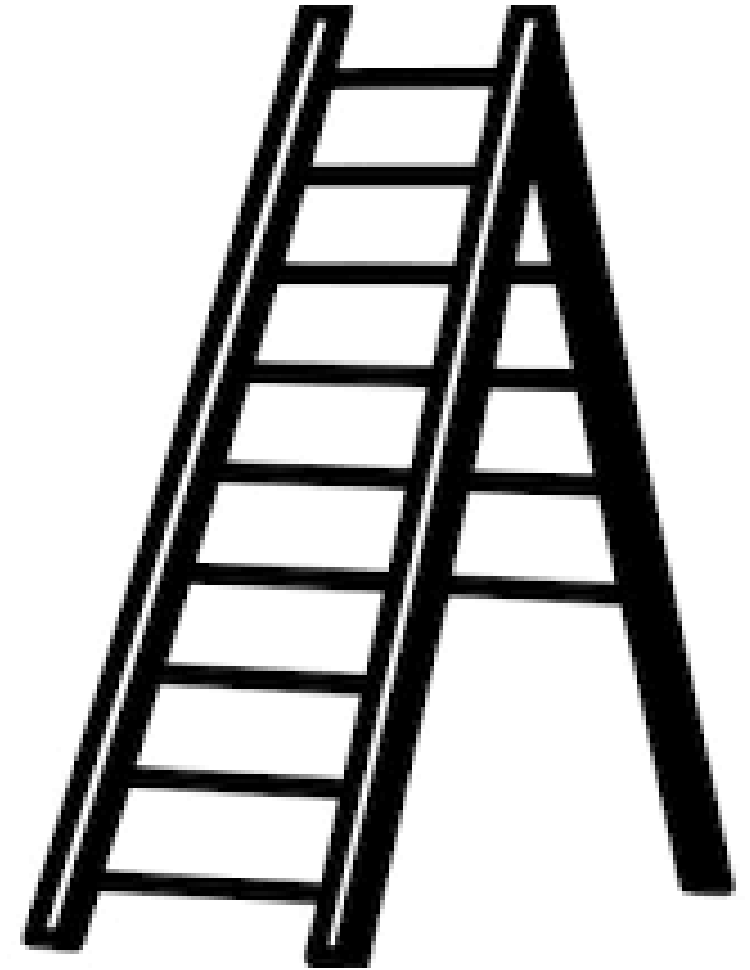
Objective: Cultivate consistent, reliable contributors.

Tactics:

- Invite members to take on formal roles (e.g., site coordinator, committee lead).
- Offer leadership development workshops.
- Engage committed members in strategic planning or negotiations.

Leadership Focus:

- Build trust through transparency and shared decision-making.
- Create pathways for growth and mentorship.



Step 5: Reaching the Top – *Creating Opportunities for Others to Climb*

Objective: Empower members to lead, organize, and inspire others.

Tactics:

- Support members in organizing their own events or initiatives.
- Encourage representation at regional or statewide union gatherings.
- Develop a leadership pipeline with coaching and peer support.

Leadership Focus:

- Shift from directing to empowering.
- Celebrate leadership as a collective legacy.



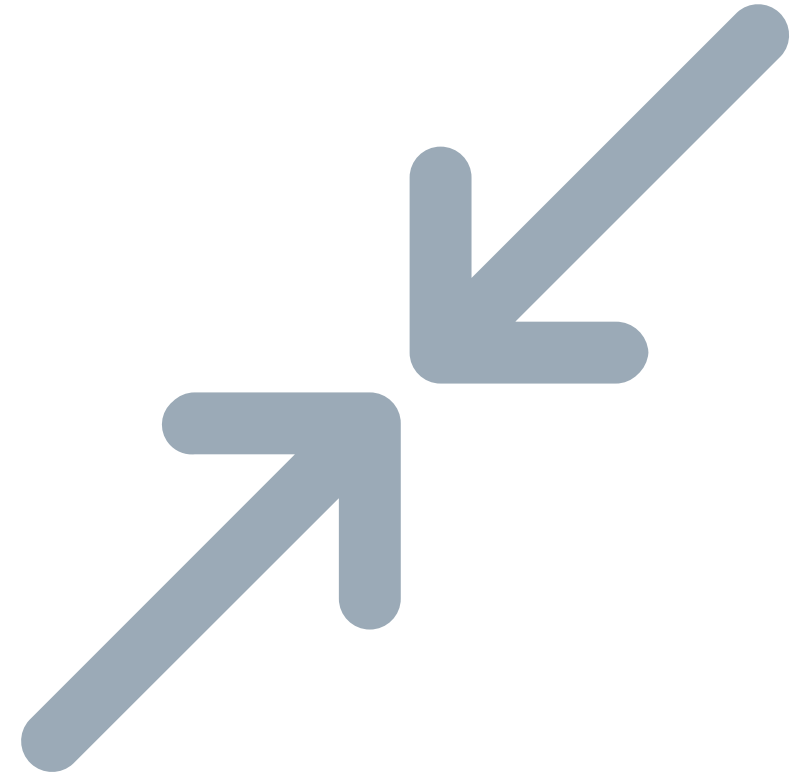
Scenario Time! Page 22

Welcome to the “Stories That Lift Us” ladder activity.

Together, we will plan how to engage members and community leaders in a book giveaway and storytelling event. Use this ladder to map out actions, leadership support, and communication strategies that build momentum and uplift diverse voices.

Ladder of Engagement Stage	Member activity to engage others.	Leadership action to support it.	Communication method to amplify it.
Spotting the Ladder (Spark curiosity and introduce the campaign.)			
Gripping the First Rung (Invite members to take simple actions to show interest.)			
Climbing with Purpose (Build momentum and visibility through collective action.)			
Standing Steady (Deepen commitment and create space for member leadership.)			
Reaching the Top (Empower others to lead and sustain the campaign.)			

Share Out!



Future Application: Applying the Ladder to Your Base Building Plan

Base Building Plan

TARGET AUDIENCE Who is your most important target audience? (parents? students? other community members?)	KEY CONTACTS Who can help you connect with that audience?	OUTREACH SITES Where are the best places to find and talk to your target audience?

GOALS			
OUTREACH HOURS How many outreach hours will you do each week? What is your total number of hours for the month?	CONTACTS How many new contacts - name & phone/email - do you expect to make this month?	ONE-TO-ONES How many one-to-ones will you do each week? What is your total number for the month?	COMMITMENT & TURNOUT List any events & meetings you have this month, and goals for how many commits to attend, and how many people turn out.

Organizer Math: For new outreach, about 1 in 3 of people you reach out to will agree to come to an event. About 1 in 2 of the people who committed to come will actually show. So you need to outreach to about 6x the number of people who you want to come to your event.

Journal: Open a Document and Reflect

- › What ideas or perspectives shifted as your group built the ladder?
- › Which step did you see a strong potential for big impact?
- › What strategies felt most effective for supporting and amplifying member voices?



Key Points: Using the Ladder Strategically



Map your members: Identify where individuals currently sit on the ladder.



Design your campaign: Align tactics with each stage to meet members where they are.



Track progress: Use engagement metrics to assess movement and adjust strategy.



Build culture: Reinforce that union work is shared, valued, and visionary.

Feedback time



- › Goal – 100% Participation
- › 6 Short Questions
- › We use what you give us

What is
becoming
clearer?

What remains
murky?

Housekeeping

Closing the Day

