

Mel King Institute

Developing a Campaign

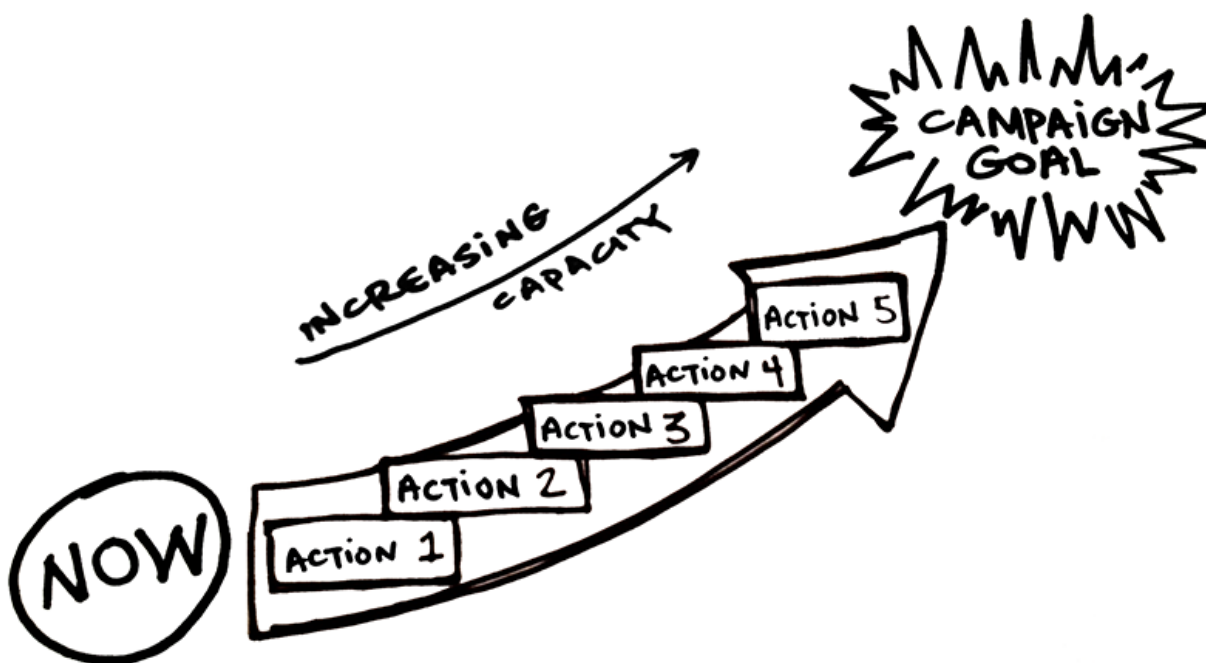
During Day 1 of the training, we focused on building an inclusive network of neighbors who can build collective power in order to accomplish shared goals. Today we will focus accomplishing those goals through campaigns.

A campaign is a sustained organizing effort toward a specific goal. An example of a goal could be stopping an eviction, building a playground on a vacant lot, or passing a piece of legislation.

Over time, campaigns accomplish two things:

1. Build group capacity and develop leaders, and
2. Win concrete victories for the community.

A campaign looks like this:



Source: Trainings.350.org

Over time, energy and participation in the campaign should grow. Your actions should increase pressure on the decision-maker until it is easier for them to say YES than NO to you. To do this, you will need to choose tactics that build power and visibility.

Campaign Steps

1. Build an inclusive network of impacted people.

This step is ongoing! We focused on these skills in Day 1.

2. Based on the issues that people care about, identify a campaign goal.

3. Recruit more people, and then revise the campaign goal as needed.

4. Create a campaign strategy with escalating tactics based on a power analysis.

5. TAKE ACTION!

6. Evaluate and reassess.

Steps 2 and 3: Turning Issues into Goals

Issues that are Widely and Deeply Felt	What Specific Change Would Fix the Issue? <u>This is our GOAL</u>	Who Has the Power to Accomplish the Goal? <u>This person is our TARGET</u>

Note that as you recruit more people, your sense of the issues that are widely and deeply felt may change. As a result, your goals may change. This is why goal setting happens in Step 2 and Step 3! You may need to repeat parts of the goal-setting process, such as the Dot Exercise, as your group grows. This may feel messy, but remember, short-cuts lead to dead ends! To stay strong for the long haul, your group will need to 1.) honor a bottom-up decision-making process, and 2.) win changes that improve people’s lives.

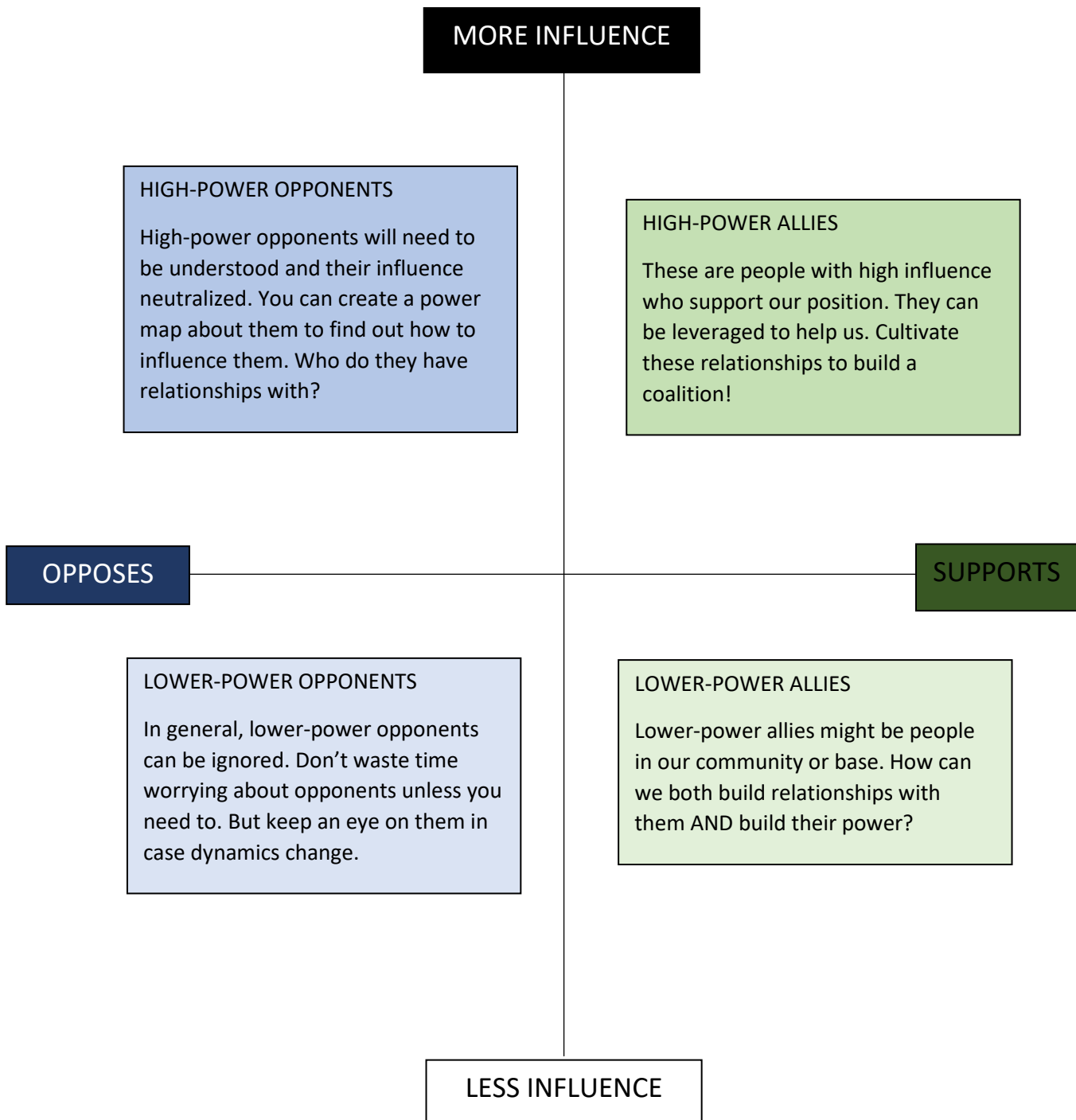
Step 4: Campaign Strategy

Step 4, Part 1: Strategy Chart

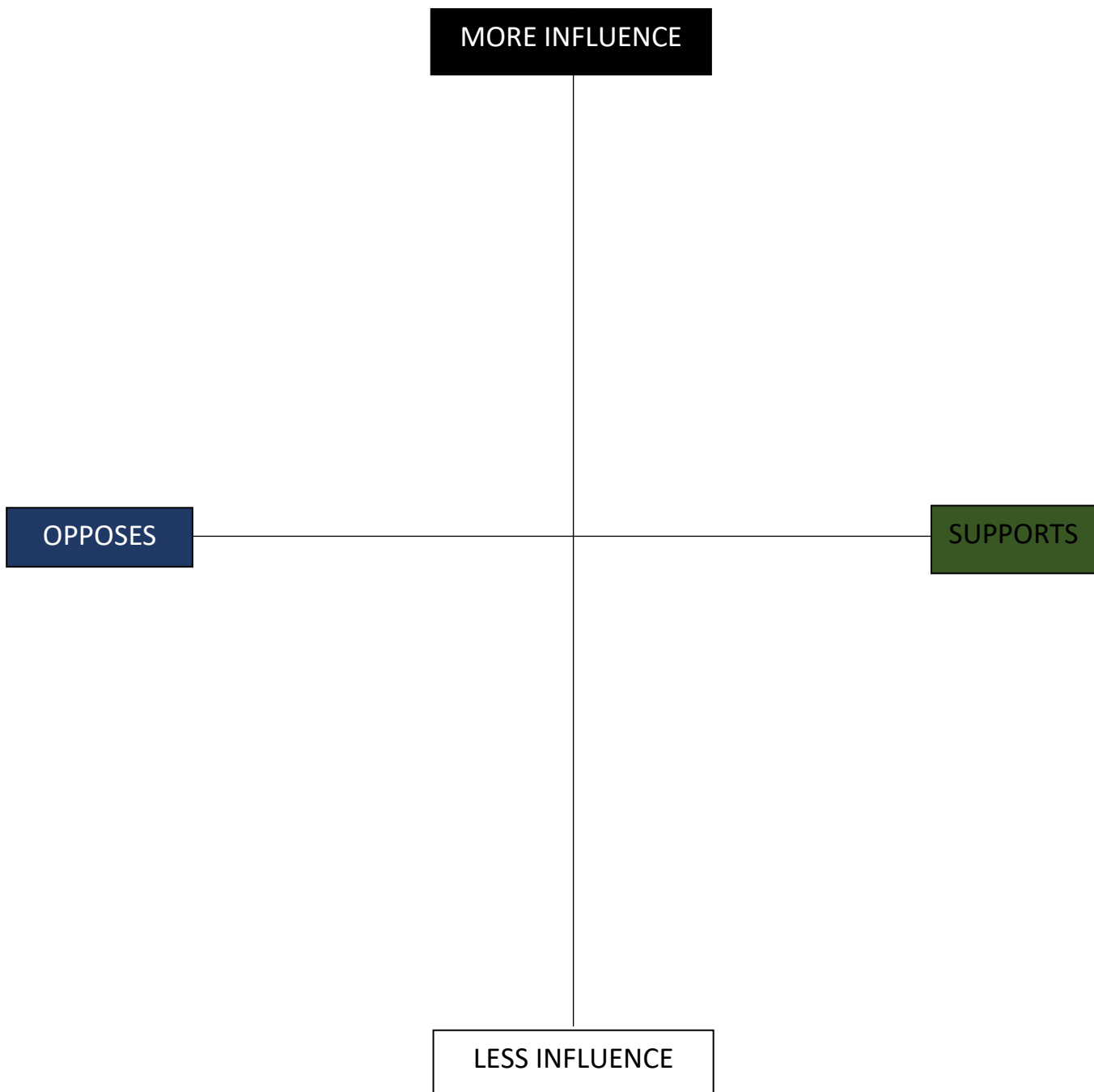
1. Campaign Goal – What are we trying to accomplish?
2. Target – Who is the decision-maker? A decision-maker has a name and a face!
3. What does the Target care about? Circle any that apply and add more. Holding on to power Her/his/their reputation Advancing justice Fundraising Selling products
4. Who does the Target have relationships with?

Step 4, Part 2: Power Map

Now that you have a target, you create a map of the people who influence him/her/them. People and groups with a lot of influence will go toward the top of the map. People and groups who support your goal will go on the right-hand side. As a result, we can figure out how to interact with the various players.



In the quadrants below, add the people from Box 4 in your Strategy Chart.



In organizing, there is a saying: “No permanent allies, no permanent opponents.” Depending upon your issue, goal, and target, one person might be an ally today but an opponent tomorrow. It’s not about personalities—it’s about power.

Step 4, Part 3: Messaging

Your campaign will need to create messages in order to communicate about what you are doing to various audiences. We won't be covering this today, but contact the Mel King Institute for more training on this topic.

Step 5: TAKE ACTION!

Now that you've thought about your goal, target, allies and opponents, you can begin to plan some escalating actions. Actions are also sometimes called tactics.

Your tactics should raise the pressure on the decision-maker so that it is easier for them to say YES than NO to you.

Your actions should also build power, participation and visibility for your campaign.



CHECKLIST: CHOOSE TACTICS THAT FIT

Your escalating campaign is made up of many tactics. A tactic could be mild, like a survey, or militant, like a work slowdown. It could be traditional, like a picket, or it could be a creative stunt a member just dreamed up. When your group is weighing what tactic to try next, here are some factors to consider:

- Does the action relate to your issue?
- Will it increase the pressure on the decision-maker?
- Is it simple?
- Is it visible?
- Is it timed for effect?
- Is it new and different—or tried and true?
- Are enough people ready to do it?
- How will others react?
- Will it unify people?
- How will management react?
- Could it backfire?
- Does it violate the law or the contract?
- If so, are you prepared for the consequences?
- Will it be fun?





TURN UP THE HEAT: ACTION THERMOMETER

Don't bring out your big guns right away. Start with an easy activity and get lots of people to participate. If that doesn't succeed, gradually increase the intensity of your actions, but make sure you don't leave people behind by escalating too quickly.

One way to visualize escalating tactics is to arrange them on a thermometer, with each action "hotter" than the last. For instance, here are the steps a group of New Haven teachers took to solve the mold problem at their school, beginning from the bottom of the thermometer:

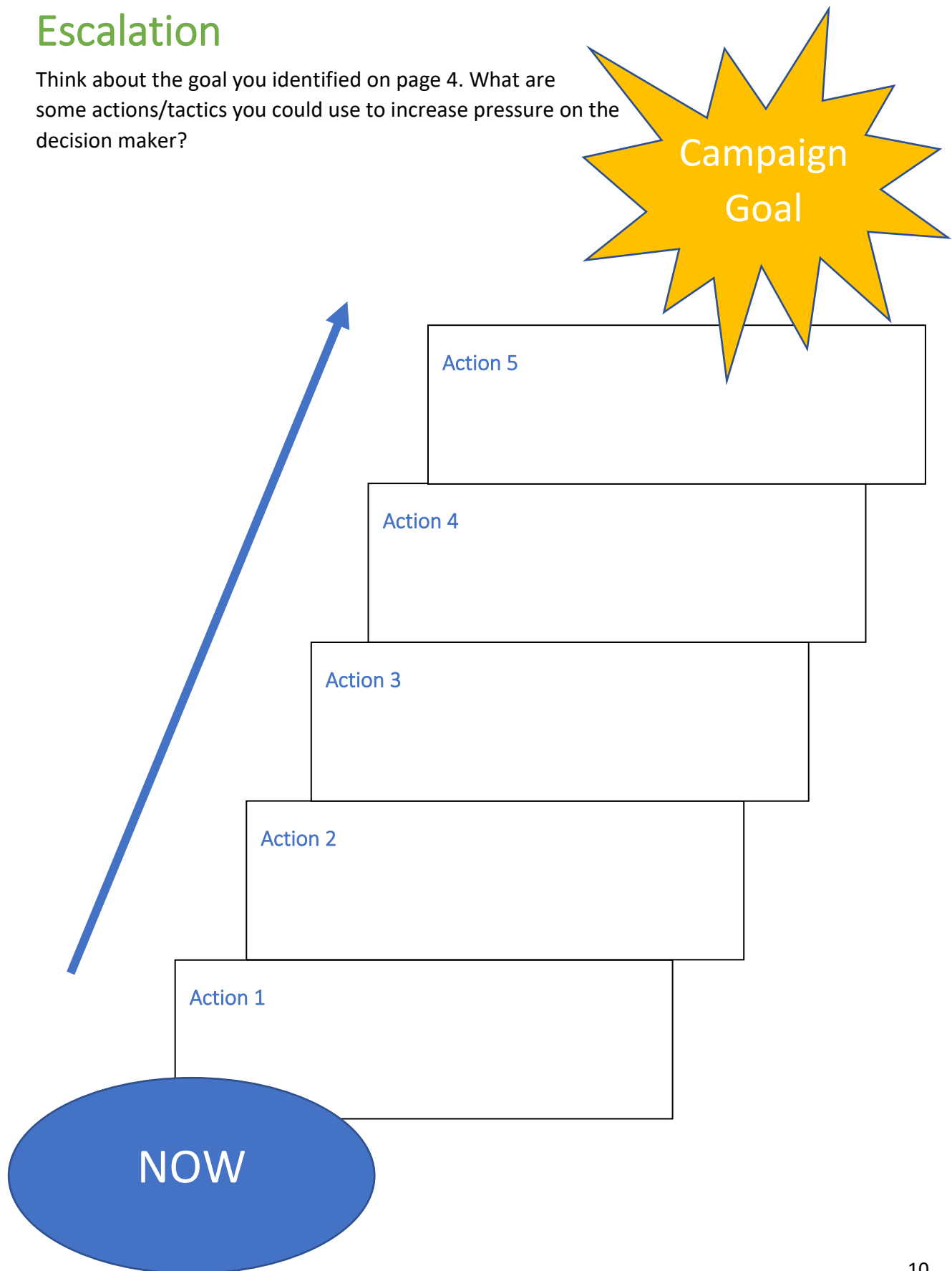


14. Walked out of a meeting en masse
13. Spoke to the media
12. Pulled a publicity stunt
11. Called a meeting of supporters
10. Used the result to formulate specific demands, with deadlines
9. Filed an information request
8. Reached out to parents
7. Published a newsletter
6. Formed a grievance committee
5. Developed a communication network
4. Conducted a health survey
3. Gathered signatures on a grievance
2. Defined their issue: air quality
1. Met as a small group



Escalation

Think about the goal you identified on page 4. What are some actions/tactics you could use to increase pressure on the decision maker?



Step 6: Evaluate and Reassess

Congratulations! You've designed a campaign with a goal, target, and escalating actions. After each action, it's very important to step back and assess how things are going. Check and update your power map. Have people moved? Do low-power allies have more power now? Has a low-power opponent become more powerful? Has anyone become more or less supportive of your goal? You can adjust your next action based on the new power dynamics.

Of course, it's also crucial to evaluate the campaign after you win your goal (or change your goal). What worked, and what didn't? How is the community stronger now than it was before? Is our network bigger and more tightly interconnected? Are neighbors better educated about root causes and civic engagement? Are folks ready and willing to keep taking action? What's your next issue, your next goal?

Remember, achieving social justice is a marathon, not a sprint. Be sure to take care of yourself and have fun along the way.

Epilogue: Never a Failure, Always a Lesson

From *Secrets of a Successful Organizer*, pages 248- 249

"One hard reality about organizing: you're going to fail a lot. You'll lose more often than you win. This doesn't mean you're doing it wrong.

"You'll start a lot of things that won't go anywhere. In fact, if that's not happening, it means you're not trying enough things.

"One action usually doesn't carry the day; it takes persistence. And even a well-planned campaign, with a strong issue, good leaders, and escalating tactics, will often end in defeat. Scratch beneath the surface of any big victory, and you'll find it was preceded by a series of losses. You keep losing until you win.

"Chin up. Learn everything you can from every loss. Find the silver linings, such as the new activists and supporters you recruited. Shore them up and build for the next time.

"See each fight as a chance to practice playwright Samuel Beckett's advice: "Try again. Fail again. Fail better.'"

Read More

Read more at What Is a Campaign? By Trainings.350.org, available at:
<https://trainings.350.org/?resource=what-is-a-campaign>.

“Do not get lost in a sea
of despair. Be hopeful,
be optimistic. Our struggle
is not the struggle of a day,
a week, a month, or a year,
it is the struggle of a lifetime.
Never, ever be afraid to make
some noise and get in
good trouble,
necessary trouble.”

— John Lewis
in a 2018 tweet