

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNICATING WITH HUMANS

Stories

When a person listens to a story, both sides of the brain are working. The left brain is processing the words, while the right brain is actively filling in the gaps. This is the reason why it is so important to read to children, to allow their brains to imagine the story, rather than using television and films for all their learning¹

People
remember stories

Campaign communications need to roll out before an audience like a story, from the beginning.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show two ways of giving the same information.

We can immediately see what's happening in Figure 2.1 because it's a story. Figure 2.2 addresses the same subject – wolves, minors and near-death experiences – but in a quite different, less memorable way.

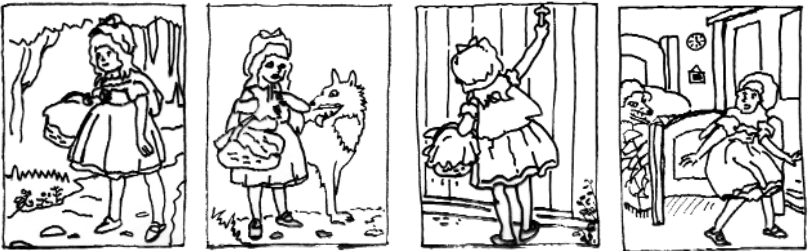


Figure 2.1 *A story involving a wolf, a little girl and a near-death experience*

Report on Non Accidental Wolf Related Deaths

Table 4. 4. Data included in the analysis by year

State	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Alaska					
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0
California	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	0	0	0	0	0
Indiana	0	0	0	0	0
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	0	0	0	0	0
Kentucky	0	0	0	0	0
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	0
Maine	0	0	0	0	0
Madison	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	0	0	0	0	0
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi	0	0	0	0	0
Missouri	0	0	0	0	0
Montana	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	0	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	0	0	0	0	0
New York	0	0	0	0	0
North Carolina	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio	0	0	0	0	0
Oklahoma	0	0	0	0	0
Oregon	0	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	0	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	0	0	0	0	0
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	0	0	0	0	0
Texas	0	0	0	0	0
Utah	0	0	0	0	0
Vermont	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	0	0	0	0	0
West Virginia	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	0	0	0	0	0
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0

Historical statistics showing trend in wolf-related non-accidental injuries involving minors (under the age of 16) in central regions. Daylight hours observations only. After column 3 the basis of calculation changes but the base sample remains the same. The trend is not significant but individual cases remain a cause for concern, especially in the small number which result in fatalities or close escapes. The figures speak for themselves.

Figure 2.2 *Another way of displaying the information in Figure 2.1 – but less memorable*

Stories certainly pre-date writing, and probably art. Use stories wherever you can, because people remember them, and if possible use real people in stories, because we can identify with them. Save the academic report format for communicating with machines, or for professional seminars.

Stories are how we relate many important things in our lives, inside and outside organizations. They provide a free way for an idea to spread: as in urban myths, moral tales, or ‘memes,’² well beyond any paid-for communication.

Stories with human interest, based around a person, whether real or not, can move us from right-brain to left-brain communication, from facts and rationality to emotions and feelings. They take us there: ‘it could be me’. Like pictures, stories don’t need to argue, and you can’t argue with them. Because *you* work out the meaning of a story yourself without having it thrust upon you, they can also more easily lead to that rare event, a change of mind. The deeper meaning can come to you long after you first hear a story.³

Using stories multiplies your options with the media: human stories are the stuff of feature pages, not news pages. That way you often get

more space, and more readers, and your message is more likely to emerge intact, especially if it is embedded in the story structure.

Some say stories tap into fundamental psychology. Jan Stewart⁴ points to four ‘brain states’: beta (awake and most active), alpha (awake but daydreaming), theta (almost asleep) and delta (sleeping). She says of stories:

At the second attention level, as the brain searches for a deeper meaning ... the right brain is often favoured as relationships and patterns are developed. Processing ... is an unconscious process – that is, we are not aware that we are doing it. The second attention level is where the story is reformulated to have personal relevance. Sometimes the story stays at this level and causes unconscious behavioural change, or it can rise into the first attention level through an ‘A-ha!’ reaction.

It is vital that the story, myth, legend or whatever is chosen, is selected carefully. Ideally, the story should be easily understood at the first attention level, but stimulate a search for a deeper meaning at some time in the future.

There are said to be a number of ‘basic types’ of story. These structures might help tell yours. Here are examples⁵ applied to opera:

- 1 *Cinderella* – Unrecognized virtue recognized in the end. It’s the same story as the Tortoise and the Hare or The Grasshopper and the Ant. Cinderella doesn’t have to be a girl, nor does the story even have to be a love story. What is essential is that the good is at first despised, but recognized in the end. Further examples are *La Cenerentola*, *Cendrillon* and *The Magic Flute*
- 2 Achilles – The Fatal Flaw – this provides the groundwork for practically all classical tragedy, although it can be made into comedy, too – for example, *Samson et Dalila*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Falstaff*
- 3 Faust – The debt that must be paid, the fate that catches up with all of us sooner or later – other examples include *La Bohème*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*
- 4 *Tristan and Isolde* – That standard triangular plot of two women and one man, or two men and one woman – also *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Tosca* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. *Carmen*, *L’elisir d’amore* (The Elixir of Love), *Pagliacci*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*
- 5 *Circe* – The spider and the fly – such as *Othello*, *Salome*

- 6 *Romeo and Juliet* – Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy either finds or does not find girl (it doesn't matter which) – *The Merry Widow*, *L'italiana in Algeri*, (The Italian Girl in Algiers), *La Bohème*, *Così fan tutte*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*
- 7 The gift taken away. This may take two forms: either the tragedy of the loss itself, or it may be about the search that follows the loss, such as in *Orfeo*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Il Trovatore*
- 8 The hero who cannot be kept down. This is demonstrated in stories of perseverance and determination that result in either joy or destruction for the protagonist, as in *Turandot*, *Don Giovanni* and *Aida*.

The story often has a familiar pattern, 'grammar' or structure. Robert McKee⁶ identifies five stages: the inciting incident – which is the primary cause of all that follows – the progressive complications, the crisis, climax and resolution.

Campaigns are always full of stories but few campaigners have made enough use of them, myself included. The biggest political impact achieved by a pesticides campaign on which I worked with Friends of the Earth resulted from the public response to crop-spraying incidents, but not because we planned it that way. The campaign presented policy arguments based on detailed desk research but we were unexpectedly contacted by large numbers of the public with their (often very distressing) stories. If we had appealed for the public to come forward with their experiences from the start, and based the campaign around those, we might have achieved more.⁷

Seeing is believing: Communication preferences

Of all of our inventions for mass communication, pictures still speak the most universally understood language

Walt Disney

If you need to chose one medium, then it should be visual

Almost every campaign is best conducted visually. Visuals give reach, accessibility and impact; modern technology has created an increasingly visual media world, and seeing, generally, is believing, because most people have an inbuilt preference for receiving information visually.⁸ For most people, a picture is worth a thousand words.

When we understand, we often say: 'I see'.⁹ Some people's inbuilt preference is for speech – 'we sang from the same hymn sheet' – or touch – 'we clicked'.

Visuals can reach our emotions, bypassing argument. They can reinforce or change views. Research any issue and you tend to find that people's views often track back to some event, recalled as a picture. 'It was when I saw X that I realized things were serious.'

A campaign should communicate in as many dimensions as possible, but if you needed to choose one medium, and without one-to-one knowledge of your intended audience, then it should be visuals. Once there's feel-touch-and-smell media, things may change.

Being visual often means escaping institutional preferences for text. Even if they accept the need for visual communication, many organizations communicate that with a written note!

However partial, TV is still enough of a window on the world for visuals to be used as a benchmark of truth. 'I just saw that – it's true.' All reporters tend to say 'we have seen' or 'we have been shown', when introducing an element of the story that they are positioning as true. If, on the other hand, a report begins with 'we are being told', then you are immediately suspicious that a 'claim' is being offered, something open to dispute and only a varnished version of the truth. The starting point is already some way below the 'truth'. So events that can be photographed or directly witnessed or participated in are important.

However, Gardner¹⁰ argues that schools and culture focus on linguistic and logical mathematical intelligence (measured as intelligence quotient, IQ), to the detriment of other types of intelligence and ways of learning. Institutions tend to promote people who are good at text, speech or numbers, and their preferences tend to dominate internal communications. If this then dominates campaigns, however, the consequences can be disastrous.

Gardner proposes teaching based on multiple intelligences.¹¹ Campaigners could profitably do the same:¹²

- words (*linguistic intelligence* – offer speech or text);¹³
- numbers or logic (*logical-mathematical* – offer numbers, classifications);
- pictures (*visual-spatial* – offer visual aids, colour, art, visual organizers);
- music (*musical* – offer music or environmental sounds, or key points in a rhythm or melody);

- self-reflection (*intrapersonal* – self-discovery, self-analysis, setting your own goals – offer choices and evoke personal feelings or memories);
- a physical experience (*bodily-kinaesthetic* – ‘hands-on’ – involve the whole body);
- a social experience (*interpersonal* – for example a party or exhibition – offer peer or cross-age sharing or cooperative work);
- an experience in the natural world (*naturalist* – offer ways to relate the subject to environment or ecology).

Putting on a festival complete with opportunities for reading, logic workshops, model-making, quiet contemplation, and so on, may be impractical. Yet reliance on words and numbers is likely to be less effective than a more holistic approach.

Most successful NGO communication has hinged on visuals. Amnesty International’s candle, symbolizing its role of bringing hope and light into dark places, the guide dog of Guide Dogs For The Blind, the Worldwide Fund for Nature’s (WWF) 1961 launch with pictures of doomed rhinos and its panda logo, the Cousteau Foundation’s ship *Calypso*, Greenpeace’s actions at sea, the stylish advertisements of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF),¹⁴ invoking on the established dramatic format of the ‘flying doctor’.

Face to face, our body language outweighs what we say. Although there are important cultural differences,¹⁵ how we *look* generally says more than anything else. Psychologist Albert Mehrabian,¹⁶ is said to have stated that when it comes to expressing feelings:¹⁷

- 55 per cent of the communication consists of body language;
- 38 per cent is through tone of voice;
- 7 per cent is through words.

Feelings are important in determining what we think of a person or proposal. Do we trust them? If not, we’re unlikely to believe them. Emotional and psychological deficits easily overwhelm rational, scientific, economic or technical plus points. As the PR firm Burson-Marsteller states: ‘You can’t win an argument with someone who has more credibility than you do.’

Even if you don’t bother to communicate in pictures, then visually dominated media, such as TV or even many newspapers, will do it for you and insert images themselves. These then dominate what is communicated and received – and may not be what you had hoped for. So make sure *your* pictures tell your story.

Engagement and agency: What difference can I make?

The trouble with socialism is that it would take up too many evenings.

Oscar Wilde¹⁸

Campaign targets need to be big enough to matter and small enough to take on

Many campaigns fail because they simply never gather enough support. Campaigning is a ‘follow me’ or ‘come with us’ exercise. It invites others to give up some of their time, and make your agenda theirs. So why should anyone go out of their way to support or join your campaign?

Variations in campaign support are not just due to some people being better at it than others, or some causes being inherently ‘sexier’ or easier. If you hear a campaigner say that, it is likely that they haven’t done the necessary design work to attract support.

In assessing a campaign proposition we all ask ‘is it worth it?’ We mostly assess the proposition intuitively: ‘This is for me’, or not.

The cause

Do we care about the cause? Is the campaign needed? (If the audience is already aligned, the answer should be ‘yes’.)

The benefit

What will the results be if the campaign succeeds – generally or personally? Does it make a worthwhile difference? What agency does it give me: how does it increase my influence over the world around me? Does it make existing mechanisms work better, or provide new ones?

The means

Are they attractive – or do they put me off?

The prospects

Does it stand a chance of success?

Three things – the objectives, resources and activities – ‘triangulate’ a campaign’s perceived feasibility. If they are seen to match, the campaign can look attractive, workable and credible. If they do not, the campaign will be rejected, no matter how good the cause.

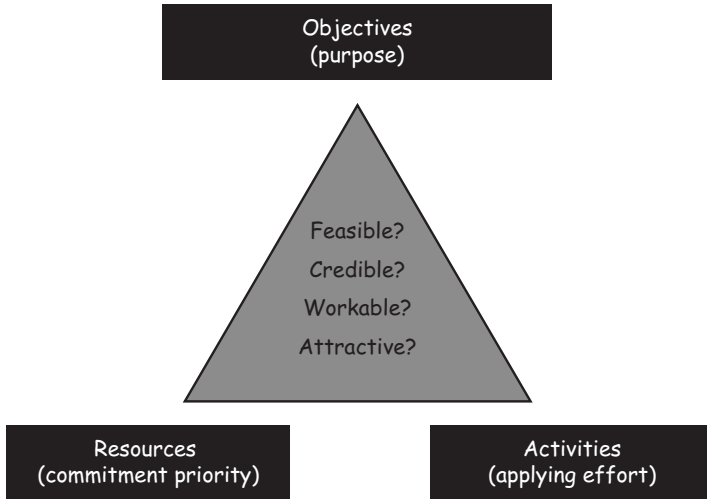


Figure 2.3 *The feasibility triangle*

The 'feasibility triangle' can be used to assess a campaign, project or an organization.

The 'feasibility triangle' is like a three-legged stool – if the legs don't match in length, it will topple over.



A lack of support may be put down to 'the fact that people don't care', or the idea that 'they are ignorant of the facts'. The press can take the rationalization a step further and call it 'compassion fatigue' or announce that something is 'no longer an issue – people don't care'. Just as likely, the project doesn't look credible.

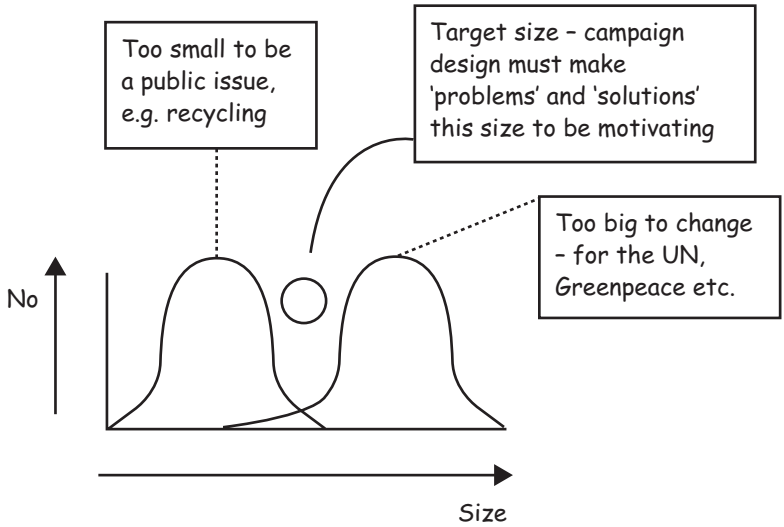
Common feasibility problems

The objective is too big

The naive NGO failure, where the ultimate aim rather than an achievable objective is stated. For example, the Lower Snoring Campaign to Change World Trade (resources: four people and a dog). Many small groups 'taking on' big issues stay small and marginal, talking about change rather than achieving it.

Objectives too small

1990s research on the world views of UK Greenpeace supporters and others like them revealed a motivational 'black hole' that disconnected campaigns from potential support. People sympathetic to environmental issues often did not find them at all engaging.



Note: Campaign targets presented to individuals need to be bite-sized so that they are worthwhile and achievable

Figure 2.4 *The too-big-too-small problem*

Recycling was among a host of ‘green’ activities too small to be worth discussing in public: normal to do but not worth remarking upon. Others, such as global warming, were ‘too large’ for individuals to engage with: ‘environment for environmentalists’. The answer to this is to break down big problems into smaller parts so that, for example, when Greenpeace and its supporters acted together, small efforts could add up to big results.¹⁹

Objective not visible

Public bodies often suffer from this when they fail to make the objective explicit, and simply announce activities or resources, leaving the audience to ‘patch in’ an assumed objective from rumour or what they may have heard or seen on TV. Frequently, the assumed objective is huge.

Too much time spent on the objective

Where campaigning is not the main activity of a voluntary organization, there is often too much focus on defining the objective, and too little on putting together activities and resources.

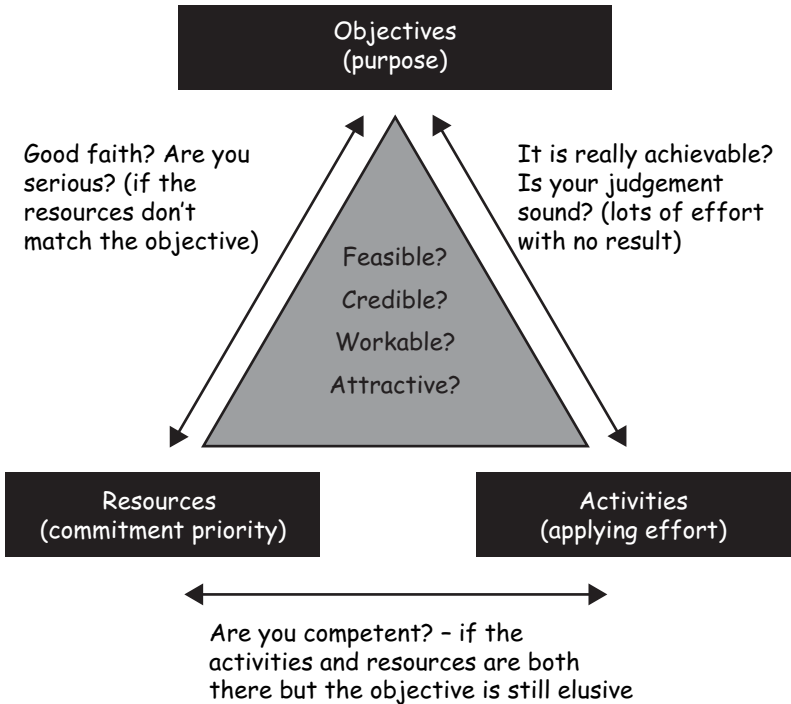


Figure 2.5 *Some of the doubts that can be raised if the objectives, activities and resources do not seem to fit*

Being vague

Companies tend to succumb to waffle outside their core business areas.

Poorly defined goals on 'difficult' issues sound good in a senior management team meeting, but look flimsy once they reach the annual report, and fall apart completely under public questioning.

Inadequate activities

Established NGOs can become too cautious to campaign effectively; too bureaucratic, with internal stakeholders defending their departmental interests or career paths, to take any serious risks. They may believe their own propaganda about being 'quietly effective' – if true, then of course there will be no need to campaign. Such groups set good objectives and have the resources, but they don't deploy them, don't invest in campaign tools, and don't involve top staff in campaigning.

Levels of engagement

Four stages of 'doing'

Engagement often seems to fit a four-stage pattern:²⁰ Do nothing; do one thing; systematic change; and lastly, wholesale change.

Stage 1: Do nothing

People may not have heard of the problem, what causes it, or the solution. Or it may not be significant or interesting to them. There may be no trigger. It might be that they have yet to see it in the right context, or hear it from the right messenger.

Perhaps you need to use a different channel. If you are trying to move people from Stage 1 to Stage 2, then try using the CAMP CAT tool (see p12).

Because of circumstance or psychology, belief systems, social pressures or culture, some people will never be promoted from Stage 1.

Stage 2: Do one thing

Here we identify one thing we have done 'to make a difference'. People have bought the cause but not gone very far with it. In the UK, and probably many other countries, a large number of people are at this stage in relation to say, global environmental problems: 'I buy ozone-friendly products'. Media coverage is usually enough to recruit people to Stage 2.

With established issues, these are usually the best prospects to be 'promoted' to take more action, as they have already accepted that there is a problem/solution.

Campaigners sometimes dismiss just doing one thing as 'token', but this is a mistake. Token efforts are not a sign that people don't care: it's a sign that they do. It's a rational use of time and effort: a form of bet-hedging. By doing at least something, individuals make a small contribution to what they hope is a bigger effort.

Table 2.1 *Levels of personal engagement*

Stage	What people say
Do nothing	'I don't need to do anything'
One thing	'This is what I do about it'
Systematic	'I do a, b and c. I try to do d and e... I would like to do more but...'
Wholesale	'I have changed my life because of it'

Token efforts may also be debris from some tidal wave of public concern that once swept society. Although high, dry and isolated, token gestures remind society that the problem could come again, and may be touchstones for igniting popular perception and promoting an issue to the forefront of consciousness.

Token gestures provide handles, short cuts and communication footholds, sometimes becoming icons; symbols with more than their literal meaning.

A single action may also be a response to social pressure to conform, for example around a campaign issue that has become normalized.

Stage 3: Systematic engagement

For most of us, big life changes mean working alongside others doing the same thing. This is the beauty of campaigns: they enable people to act together. They provide examples, proofs that things work, a socially acceptable or impressive explanation for taking action, and the ways, means and support to 'step out of line' without undue costs.

People at this stage frequently feel that they are not doing enough, externalize and become advocates, and consciously search for the campaign in the media. As such, they are not indicative of interest in the cause in general, but will make good use of training opportunities or campaign resources.

Stage 4: Wholesale life change

Here people change their lives completely. They might:

- give up a job to join a campaign group full-time;
- embark on a new career;
- stop campaigning and start a business to achieve the same ends;
- adopt an 'alternative' lifestyle, such as becoming a traveller or building an 'eco-home'.²¹

I met one Dutch campaigner with a conviction that nuclear power posed a serious threat to future generations. Nothing unusual in that, except that he was a rather long-term thinker. He had formed this view at school, then enrolled at university and undertaken a degree in nuclear physics, just so he could understand the industry and find ways to convince politicians that it needed to be shut down.

Another colleague was a former chief inspector of police at Scotland Yard in London: for him, coming to Greenpeace meant that he could 'do something really useful' (which had been his original

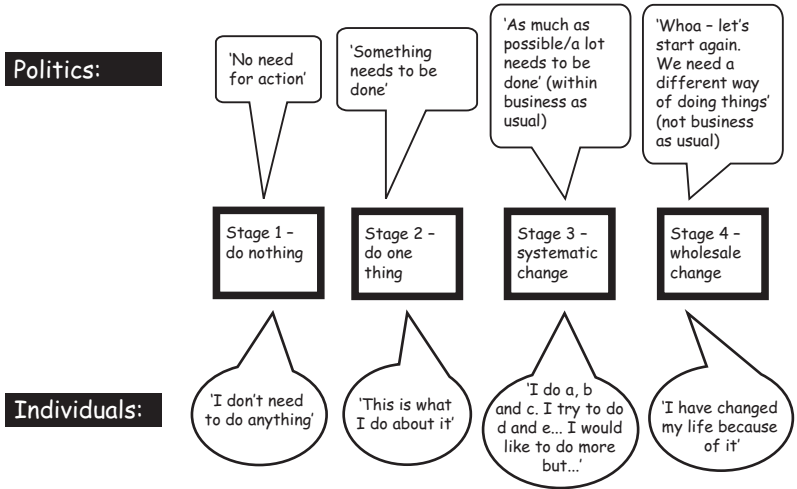


Figure 2.6 *Four-stage engagement*

motivation to join the Met), though it also meant reducing his salary by more than half.

Political institutions can show the same four-stage engagement with a campaign issue.

Engagement and shopping

Communicating with consumers

Campaigners use engagement mechanisms lifted more or less unaltered from centuries-old political campaigning: tracts, leaflets and their cyber-equivalents, polemics and speeches. This puts them at a disadvantage in a consumer context.

Discover how to best communicate in specific environments by talking to those in the business: practitioners, suppliers and trade journalists – check for them in your supporter base. They may well save you time, money and effort with free advice.

The engagement mechanism needs to match the timescale and dynamic of the process being targeted. A sustainable timber campaign might ask people to exercise buying power when moving home, a time when they may buy furniture or timber. It also needs to target the key actors – in most house-buying the critical decisions are mostly made by women, not men, for instance.

Each transaction has its own culture. In some cases it may be better to enlist the shop assistants rather than the consumers – purchases of white goods, for example, are often decided by a conversation with a sales person or engineer, who is treated as an expert.

Although shoppers may complain about supermarkets, they will be reluctant to change established habits. Context means getting both the time and place right. Potential supporters may be in supermarkets, making decisions about what products to buy – two essential factors – but that's not necessarily enough. Shoppers may be too busy. Parents of young children may be easier to reach with the same information while they are waiting to pick up the youngsters from school. Or perhaps you should go via their parents, who may have more time. Older shoppers might welcome a chat, especially if offered a cup of tea, as well. Young singles shopping in the evening might welcome an interview as a chance to meet others.

In 2000, Greenpeace UK adapted the technique known as 'accompanied shopping', in which a researcher shops with a consumer, for a genetically modified (GM) food campaign. Campaign director Jane Wildblood explains how it worked:

Greenpeace trained a network of volunteers and provided them with a kit to run events at supermarkets, to inform and engage shoppers. They set up information points outside supermarkets on Saturdays over a period of months. These had an eye-catching backdrop in red (the big, vegetable-head logo of the campaign) and leaflets to take away, as well as knowledgeable people to talk to. They used the interaction outside the supermarket (that is, not interfering with the actual shopping) to recruit the really interested for 'supermarket tours giving information on GM and organic food, promoted as the safe solution to GM and other concerns'.

These tours were scheduled throughout the day with the full backing of the supermarket managers (mostly!²²). This avoided haranguing or interfering with people when it would irritate them, but enabled high-quality engagement and visibility. The feedback mechanism was via a send-back coupon on the basic leaflet. These people were then entered on a database and sent further information and invitations to participate in campaign activity. At later stages, we gave people at supermarket entrances tear-off coupons to send into the local shop manager, MP and so on. Later still, a shopper's guide was created on the website...

Perception of change and significance

Choosing metrics to suit your campaign

Perception of change and significance often drives decision-making. *Relative* change may be the most effective thing to communicate – a rate of increase or decrease, for example. Or you may want to focus only on recruits or losses, not total amounts.

To win media attention, changes usually need to be abrupt and discontinuous. This can be achieved by using the right scale of focus, and looking for thresholds or discrete consequences of a trend.

Because of the dominance of economists and accountants in institutions, it's often said that 'what counts is what's measured'. Campaigners who supply some numbers will find it easier to get their case talked about. However, careless quantification can easily anchor debate in the wrong place.

A list of points or reasons is usually helpful, but reliance on statistics is not advisable. Though the press love them, the public generally does not trust statistics, at least in the UK.

He or she who chooses the measure, often determines the conclusion. 'Horse race' polls show which political candidate is ahead: a favourite news-making device of politicians and political commentators,²³ which also imply that things outside the focus can be disregarded.

The context affects whether something looks big or small, effective or ineffective. The old UK Central Electricity Generating Board used a demonstration of renewable energy to make it look small.²⁴ A solar panel that could illuminate one light bulb was placed outside a vast nuclear power station. On a bright day the bulb lit. The information panel explained words to the effect that: 'One day solar energy may have advanced to the point that we can use it to supply our energy needs. That day has not yet arrived, and for secure supplies of electricity, nuclear power is an essential part of a mix of reliable and proven energy sources.'

Altering perception of how to judge change may be the object of a campaign itself. Redefining progress²⁵ promotes a genuine progress indicator²⁶ in place of gross domestic product, because the latter fails to measure things such as depletion of nature, natural capital and ecological services. Here the gap between the two indicators may be the important thing to communicate.

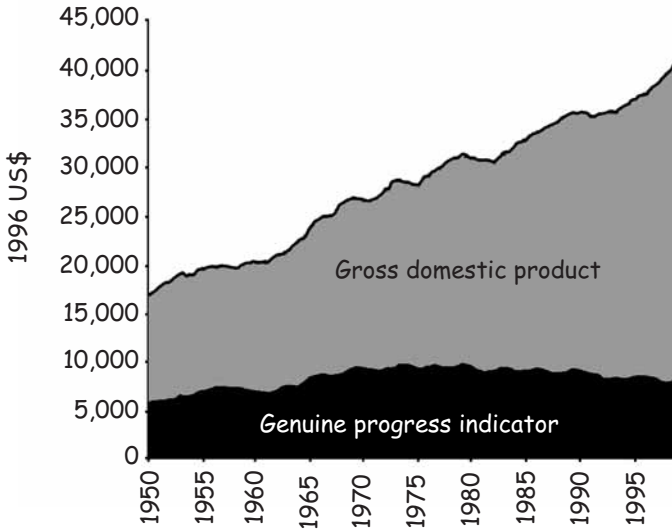


Figure 2.7 Gross production vs genuine progress, 1950 to 1999

Bridging the engagement gap

Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.

Mr Micawber, in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*²⁷

Making the impossible happen

A campaign needs to be able to honestly say, and better, show, that 'without you, we will fail: with you we can succeed'. Support has to be needed.

Pick objectives you think are just possible with a reasonable degree of public engagement. Others will tend to view them as just about impossible. Engage enough support and you can bridge the gap and make the impossible possible. When a campaign bridges the gap, it succeeds. The longer the bridge, the more successful the campaign is seen to be.

This is what makes a campaign different from everyday life. It can make campaigning exciting, inspiring and motivating: the magic that helps to change the established order of things.

Without the gap, there's no need for anyone to support your campaign by joining in. It may amuse or please but it will not engage. People will not feel needed.

In campaigning, anything better than business as usual is achievement. It is the political equivalent of Mr Micawber's sixpence – result: happiness. Anything below is within expectations – result: misery. A campaigning organization is not necessarily expected to deliver huge change, but to change more than business as usual can. Normal politics is the art of the possible. Campaigning is the art of the impossible.

Alignment

'Are you sitting
comfortably?
Then we'll begin'

Effective speakers begin by getting the attention of a group, and reminding everyone why they are there.

Generations of British children were introduced to radio stories by the BBC²⁸ with the question 'Are you sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin'. The injunction to 'sit comfortably and listen',

helps secure audience attention (awareness) by asking a question. It focuses your mind on your body and stops you thinking about whatever you were doing or were focused on before, and it aligns the audience – concerned with the same task. But the speaker doesn't need to explain all that. Indeed if she did, then it wouldn't work – you might even end up thinking about communications processes! Nor does the campaign need to explain it but the process still has to be followed.

In the process of trying to align an audience, use as few arguments as possible. Arguments come imprinted with age-old political meaning. Words are a fast lane to prejudices and preconceived ideas. Pictures are more reliable – they exist much more in the mind of the beholder, while words tend to remain the property of the source.

The more arguments you use, the more reasons you are giving that someone can disagree with. Resist the temptation to embellish a case with extra arguments: people only need one reason to disengage, adding arguments is likely to dilute strong ones with weaker ones while creating a wider range of options for disagreement. For alignment in the campaign sequence see Chapter 1 (problem–solution).

Human motivations

Motivations and appropriate engagement mechanisms differ

For campaigns about ‘public goods’ and social causes, more useful than knowing what ‘social class’ people are in (A, B, C, D, E and so on) or what people buy and where they live (see acorn-type databases, for example, at www.upmystreet.com), it’s useful to understand motivation and underlying human needs. Campaigns are, after all, about persuasion and motivation, not sales, taxes or profits.

One of the best-researched tools for this²⁹ is the Hierarchy of Needs, coined by psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1962 .

Maslow proposed that people move through life stages, meeting different needs at each stage. These needs affect how we see any issue or treat any opportunity: they are overarching influences on our behaviour, much deeper and more powerful than the whimsical notion of an ‘opinion’.

In the security- or sustenance-driven stages we need to meet the needs of: safety, security and comfort, then belonging, love and acceptance. If these needs are fully met, we may move on to meet the needs of the esteem-driven or ‘outer-directed’ phase: here we want to meet the needs for the esteem of others, recognition and approval, then self-esteem and achievement. Once these are met, we can move into the ‘inner-directed’ stage, where the needs to be met are: aesthetic,

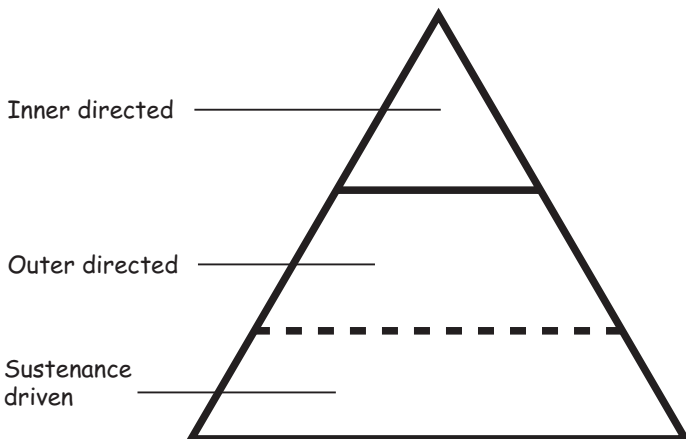


Figure 2.8 *The Hierarchy of Needs, after Maslow, 1962*

cognitive such as beauty, symmetry, to know, to understand and explore, and ultimately ‘self-actualization’ or ‘meta-needs derived from integration and transcendence of all needs’.

Pat Dade, whose company Cultural Dynamics (www.cultdyn.co.uk) runs a rolling survey representative of the whole UK population, calls the three groups Settlers (security-driven), Prospectors (esteem-driven) and Pioneers (outer-directed). Dade’s studies have tracked changes in the proportions of these groups in the UK and elsewhere over several decades, with significant implications for issues and politics (see Chapter 11). They also plot dozens of cultural attributes against the attitudes of the groups, producing a rich ‘motivational landscape’ (called value modes – see below). This shows, for example, that people with very different motivations may agree on the importance of one or another topic, but violently disagree about its relationship to other attributes.

Pioneers, Prospectors and Settlers react very differently to campaigns, campaign propositions and campaign mechanisms. To be ‘sure’ of gaining support across groups, in a mixed audience, or at least of being understood, campaigners need to communicate differently for each group (see ‘ready reckoner’, p43). To recruit support from each group, campaigners need to accept that motivations and appropriate engagement mechanisms differ.

Here are the 2002 top-line thumbnail sketches of the different groups as penned by Cultural Dynamics:³⁰

- Pioneers – Eclectics: Self-starting, self-sustaining and self-contained, these highly individual, often solitary, people pursue their own higher purposes in life. They have a mature, down-to-earth acceptance of ‘the way things are’ but continually probe and refine their understanding of who they are and where they are going. They look inwards, not outwards. They are disinterested in social status, image and material acquisitions. Furthermore, they have a passion for acquiring a holistic, aesthetic perspective on life. They are endlessly inquisitive about the meaning of everything. They simply need to ‘know’ for the sake of ‘knowing’
- Pioneers – Seekers. These aware, energetic and empathetic people continually develop an optimistic yet highly sophisticated understanding of themselves, others and the environments they share. Confident in, and invigorated by, this ongoing personal growth, they explore and extend the boundaries of their knowledge and experience with a natural enthusiasm. Their comfort with the self-sufficient way in which they think and act reflects an intuitive

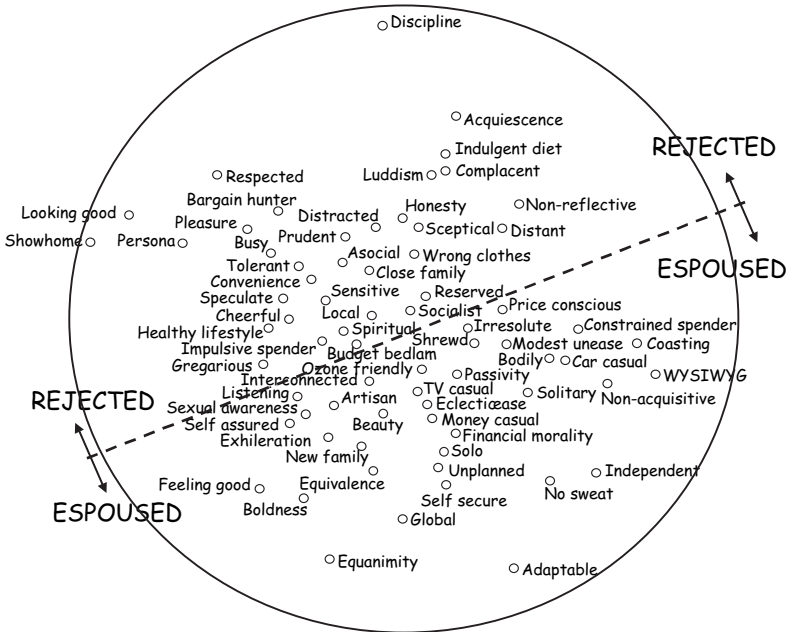


Figure 2.9 Inner-directed

understanding of the spiritual connectedness that exists among people. They therefore tend to be perceived as socially bold yet non-judgemental and wise

- Prospectors – Players: Life is a game to be played to the max – and to win – ‘no surrender’, ‘whatever it takes’, ‘just do it’. Looking and feeling good, these socially skilled people both attract attention and offer it. Listening to others is a short cut to winning – because then they don’t have to make the same mistakes. This flexible, instrumental morality enables them to question rules, push boundaries and switch allegiances with seamless ease. Shifting patterns in friendship and finance may follow in the wake of their energy and charm, but they thrive in the ambiguity and uncertainty that can paralyse others
- Prospectors – Optimists. Positive and ambitious, these are the tentative risk-takers. They are keen to chase the better things in life, but may be inconsistent in going about it. They hover between following safe, well-defined routes to success and more speculative, loosely defined ones. As a result, their optimism is supported by attempts at justifying their actions before they take them – typically by following the example of successful people that went before.

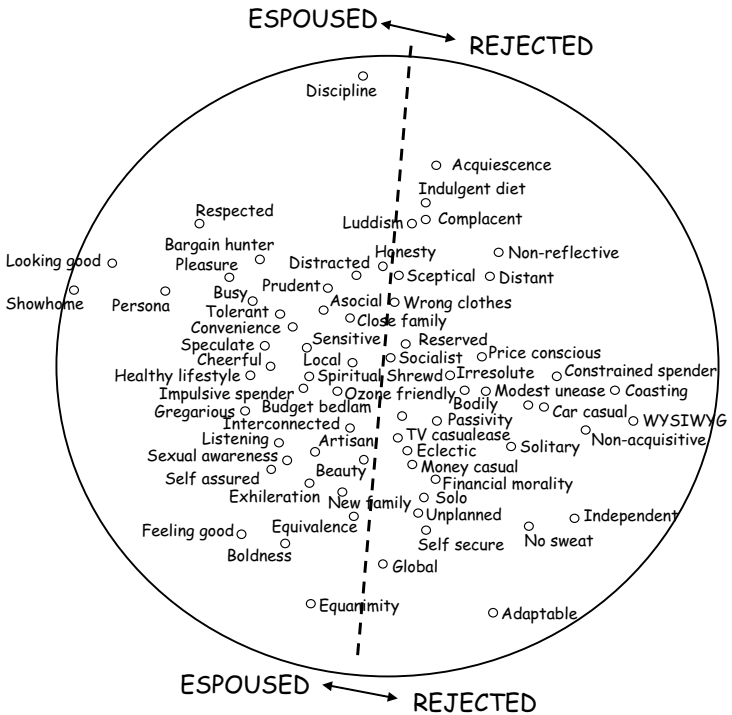


Figure 2.10 *Outer-directed (esteem driven)*

Similarly, with a basic need to gain respect and status through those around them, they may take risks but they are unlikely to engage in morally suspect ventures

- Settlers – Rationals. These people aim to enjoy life in a relaxed and organized way. The approval and respect of others, particularly close friends and family, are essential to achieving this. They need to do ‘the right thing’ – honesty and integrity are important to them. Because of their need for a calm and ordered life, they can be quite pedantic in interpreting and policing social rules in their dealings with others. Their real-world aspirations are tempered by a need for financial security, and a genuine need for material ‘stuff’
- Settlers – Roots. In a world of constant, unpredictable change, these reserved, independent individuals adhere to the tried and tested. As responsible guardians of heritage for future generations, they take comfort from accepted rules yet question shifting pockets of ‘authority’. However, this societal duty is but a symptom of their fundamental desire to provide identity, safety and certainty for

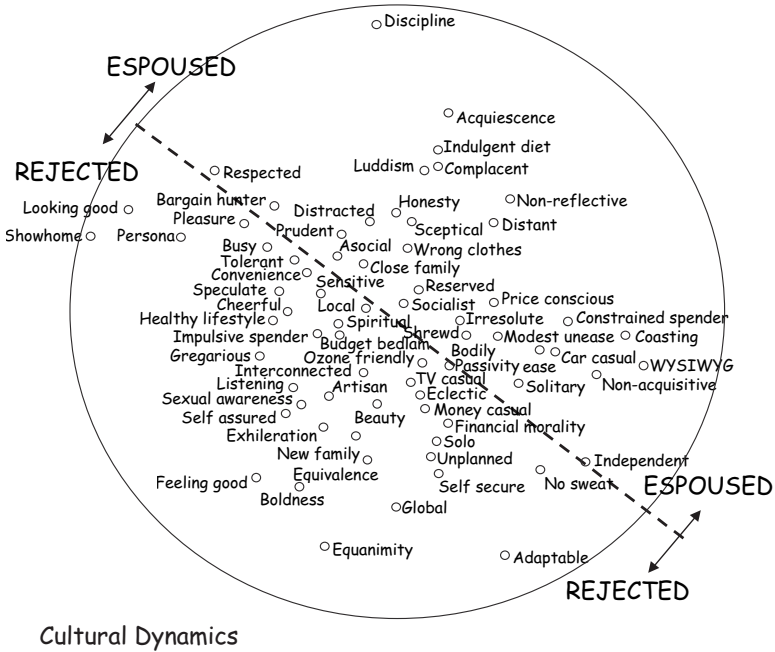


Figure 2.11 Sustenance-driven

themselves and others like them. Rules and routines simply make the struggle of daily life easier to manage.

Using Maslow-based value modes in campaign communications

Table 2.2 is a rule-of-thumb ready-reckoner to how value modes mapping and insights may help in constructing campaign propositions and running campaigns. To do so most effectively, campaigners should run issues across the map of attributes developed by Cultural Dynamics, and/or survey intended audiences to check their segmentation based on motivation.

Table 2.2 *A ready-reckoner for using Maslow-based value modes in campaign communications*

<i>Segment of population</i>	<i>Dominant motivation</i>	<i>Action mode</i>	<i>Desire</i>	<i>Why they save dolphins in Seatown</i>	<i>I want a brand to ...</i>	
Inner directed	Exploration	Do it yourself	Better questions	I feel I could be one myself – and for their own worth	Bring new possibilities	
Outer directed	Status and esteem of others	Organize	Answers	Good for the town's image and economy (and my house price)	Make me look good	
Security driven	Being safe and belonging	'Someone should do something about it'	Safeguard against external threat	So long as the dolphins keep coming back, Seatown will be Seatown	Make me secure	
<i>Segment of population</i>	<i>I like to meet</i>	<i>I connect through</i>	<i>I like to be associated with</i>	<i>I most respond to threats to</i>	<i>I</i>	
Inner directed	New, challenging and intriguing people	My own networks	Good causes that put my values into practice	Success	Visions and causes	Am me
Outer directed	Desirable and important people	Big brands, systems and organizations	Club and family	Tradition	What I've worked for	Am successful
Security driven	People like me and people I know				My way of life	Know my place

Chapter 3

CAMPAIGN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Issue mapping

Unlocking hidden knowledge

Issue mapping helps define the ambition, the objective (Chapter 4), who the actors are and what interests are at stake. It can:

- illuminate the landscape of the issue;
- identify players, processes, forces and connections;
- show what you know and reveal what you do not know;
- stimulate thinking about how and where to intervene with a strategy.

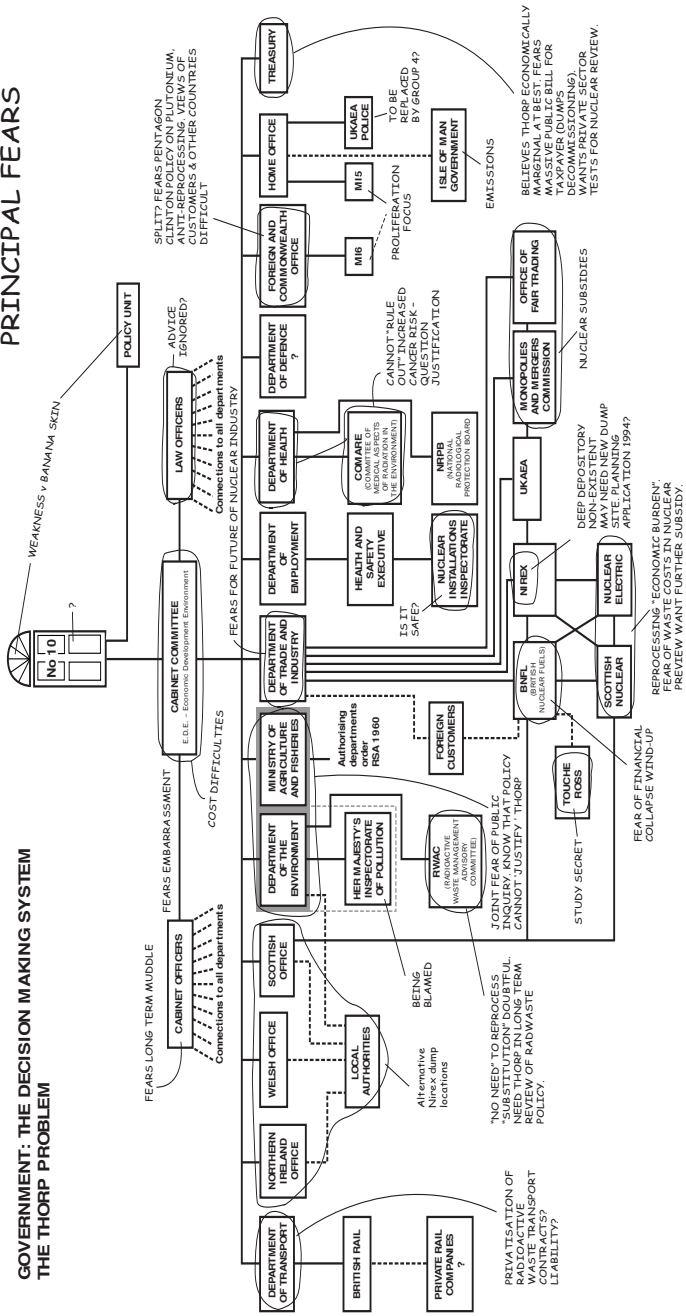
Issue mapping puts information out on the table – or most often up on a flip chart. It pools and shares knowledge. It acknowledges that everyone will have something to contribute, enables people to be heard, and uncovers absences and gaps in intelligence. It begins to align people internally and can unlock hidden knowledge in your organization. Initially, at least, it is also quick, dirty and cheap. Mapping may show new strategy options, potential allies or points of influence.

To begin, look at all the main processes and attitudes you have identified and then simply ask for each, ‘how?’ or ‘why?’ Do we know how or why these decisions are made? Do we understand the reason country X or politician B or civil servant Z takes the view that they do – or seem to? If something is a ‘closed book’ to us, then have we tried to open it? Would a new technique help? If we cannot do it, is there someone who can? Try writing up issues, causes, effects, resources, needs or processes, just to get discussion flowing.

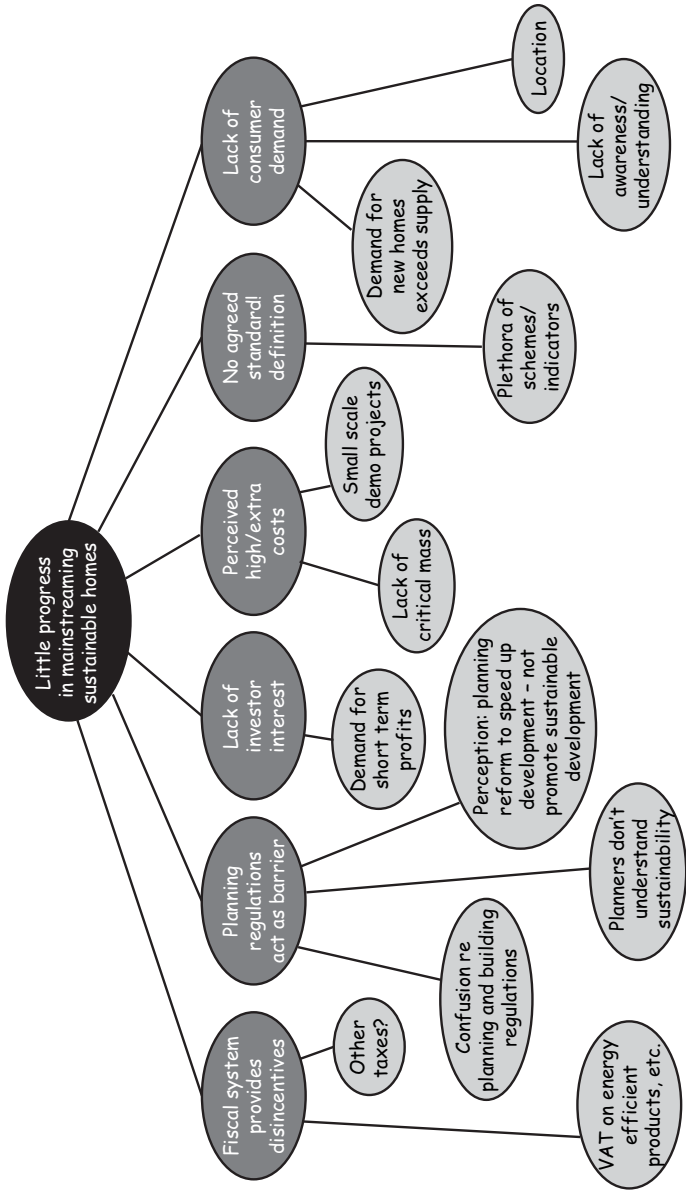
Box 3.1 THORP issue map

GOVERNMENT: THE DECISION MAKING SYSTEM THE THORP PROBLEM

PRINCIPAL FEARS



Box 3.2 WWF homes issue map



You can also map problems and solutions, and weigh up factors with force field analysis (Chapter 4). Following lines of industrial production or political accountability can be useful.

You can then identify possible areas of campaign intervention – the beginning of strategy-making – and later take one of these options, focus on a single link, and work out what would be needed to affect that (which is the critical path).

The relevant or most useful issue map will vary from topic to topic. In the case of the campaign against the opening of the Sellafield Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP), Greenpeace put a huge amount of effort into understanding the decision-making process (Box 3.1).

WWF-UK's 'Sustainable Homes Initiative' seeking one million sustainable houses in the UK, focused on characterizing the problem (See Box 3.2).¹ Paul King of WWF says:

It is important to focus on a) what is the central problem or threat you are seeking to overcome and b) what are the root causes of this problem? By stating the central problem clearly you can ask the people interested in solving it, 'why does this problem exist?' In this way it is possible to break the central problem down, bit by bit, and to map all the sub-problems that contribute to it. These 'sub-problems' can then be further broken down in the same way, until you reach the root causes...

It is then relatively simple to turn each problem into a solution or 'desired future state' – that is, turning each negative into a positive. This will create your 'objectives tree'.

Gathering intelligence

Get to know the unknown

To help create and test a plan, gather intelligence about the players and forces at work – how change works:

- Who takes which decision?
- Who influences them?
- What formal and informal decision-making processes are at work?
- Who owns whom?
- Who owes whom what?
- Who are enemies and allies?
- How has change happened before?
- How it all works – what the main processes are
- Which are the critical steps?
- Where the players get their information from
- Networks, associations and get-togethers
- Fears and concerns – what worries them?

Good sources may include:

- academic studies;
- websites and publications (it is amazing how few people actually read publicly available information they profess to be interested in);
- your own experiences and those of colleagues;
- professional or trade networks you have connections with;
- supporters;
- people who work in the target institution or business;
- rival suppliers and customers of a target company;
- trade journalists or consultants (commission them to do a project, ‘brain dump’ or workshop);
- politicians with a track record in the area concerned;
- gossip and loose talk (not to mention the old standbys of journalists, such as dustbins²) – few organizations resist the temptation to treat a particular bar or café as the alternative canteen, and many people talk more freely about the office once they are outside it;
- staff at a former advertising or PR company that has lost the account;
- relevant conferences, exhibitions and meetings (a good reason to accept invitations to talk at the conferences of the ‘opposition’).

One short cut to finding Achilles's heels, metaphorical jugulars and other important pinch points, is to talk to people who have lived with the target process for a long time. They are unlikely to be able to tell you how to run a campaign (though they may be very opinionated) but will often tell you something of significance that will give you an idea of how to do it. You need not ask for 'secrets', only for what in their world 'everybody knows already': how things work, and what changes them. Parting words³ often say most: 'Of course, it's impossible, but what would really make a difference is...'

Rely on research: once battle lines are drawn it is tempting not to venture outside even to test the basic assumptions. An easy error to make is to assume that finding the 'right answer' means choosing between known options rather than finding new things out. The Antarctic policy example (Box 3.3) shows how wrong this can be: nobody realized there was, in effect, no political oversight.

This is probably what US Secretary of State for Defense at the time, Donald Rumsfeld meant to say when he famously said:

*There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know.
There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things we
know we don't know.
But, there are also unknown unknowns. These are things we don't
know we don't know.*

If the problem can be overcome with existing practices you do not need to campaign. So campaigns ought to innovate. As a result, expect to have to uncover something unknown, to find the best strategy.

The costliest and most arrogant form of research is to launch a campaign without doing any – that way you are allowing your prejudices free rein at the cost of your supporters.

Listen carefully to others: what leads people to take the actions they do? In constructing a campaign about chemicals, I once asked a businessman who was a major supplier to the industry what he thought the main concerns of his client companies would be. What would they see as a real threat? I had a vague idea that it might be things like government regulations or consumer behaviour. I was surprised when he said: 'Graduates – if they lose the supply of new graduates, then their business will fail.' Not knowing the sector, I failed to realize their business depended on the ability to innovate, and that relied on attracting and retaining bright young graduates. Suddenly we were no longer thinking of strategies involving politicians or voters or consumers, but chemistry students.

Beware of preconceptions. These can stop us really listening. Think how wrong people can be about your work and consider how wrong you probably are about theirs.

Common misconceptions include:

- Companies only ever do things for profit. Yes, generally, but I have come across companies that take environmental or social actions because they think it is morally the right thing to do (mostly privately owned companies), or because of reputation, or in the (often small) hope of long-term advantage. All ‘against’ the interests of the next results
- Politicians only do things for votes. Sometimes not; they may act because of deeply held beliefs; or internal party deals or to trade favours, or for ego, friendship or a place in the history books. The nearer to an election, and the smaller the majority, the more voter-sensitive they tend to become, unless they are not standing again, in which case they may back even electorally suicidal campaign propositions
- The government has ‘a view’. It may express a single view, but inside most governments there are a number of often conflicting opinions on the same subject. Much of the time these are suppressed by the system and only fine nuances of difference can be seen from outside, but at times they are in free flux as policies are thought out or renewed, and those are the opportunities to lobby effectively from the inside.

Using issue maps

Choose an area
to focus on

Figure 3.1 is an issue map for climate change. It’s not in any way definitive – a lot of problems and opportunities are not shown. It illustrates the range of possible interventions, of which a dozen are shown.

In reality, there are many more.

Some campaigns, such as the Multisectoral Initiative on Potent Industrial Greenhouse Gases (MIPIGG) and Future Forests, can be distinguished by the gases they are concerned with. Most are distinguished by how they engage with psychology and politics.

The Global Commons Institute punts its favoured *solution*, a single tool for terms of negotiation (‘Contraction and Convergence’) between nations. This, with WWF, Greenpeace and FoE lobbying, is designed

Box 3.3 Antarctica

In the early 1990s, UK environment groups were struggling to convince the UK government to change its policy over Antarctica. Two unknowns were: why did Britain have the policy it did, and why was that policy apparently immune to public opinion?⁴

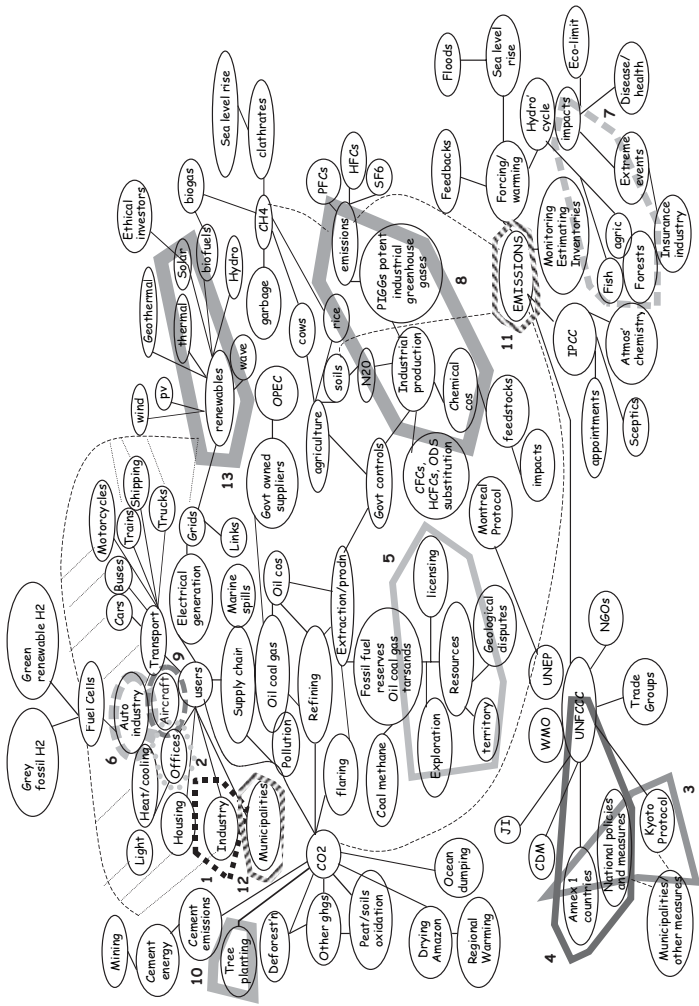
Campaigners had promoted a World Park, rather than minerals development, since the 1970s. In the 1980s WWF, Greenpeace and the Cousteau Foundation persuaded many governments to support non-development of Antarctica, but the UK remained a hold-out. It was assumed that this simply reflected ministerial views.

Research at the Public Records Office confirmed what Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher had inadvertently hinted at during the Falklands War – that Britain wanted the minerals of Antarctica. Papers dating from the time of Winston Churchill showed prime-ministerial interest in hopes of gold, uranium and especially oil, and that exploration was deliberately disguised as purely ‘scientific’ study.

Also significantly, enquiries among diplomats revealed that one Foreign Office official, Dr John Heap, had maintained a firm grip on key aspects of Antarctic policy and its international presentation for decades, yet he was not a diplomat himself. One well-informed journalist said later: ‘The situation with John Heap was remarkable – he was a law unto himself entirely’. In other words, it seemed Dr Heap was negotiating for the UK and effectively making policy, rather than Ministers making it.

Having discovered the underlying minerals rationale and the pivotal role of Dr Heap, NGOs were able to better target lobbying of ministers who, contrary to NGO assumptions, had not, in fact, given the issue much attention. When Margaret Thatcher resigned in 1990, Environment Minister Michael Heseltine was soon convinced to quickly reverse policy and back a 50-year mining moratorium.

to oil the wheels of the climate convention. The two World Resources Institute (WRI) initiatives operate outside the framework of the convention or its Kyoto Protocol – while Families Against Bush (FAB) Climate was a direct attempt to mobilize corporate pressure for the protocol.



Note: See p207 for notes on Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1 Issue map for climate change with interventions

The WRI corporate campaigns, like Greenpeace's campaigns for solar power, wind or wave energy, seek to drive progress *using* solutions. The impacts-related campaign of Clean-Air Cool-Planet is, in contrast, an awareness-raising, problem-driving strategy.

Organizations often try more than one intervention, sometimes at the same time. If you do, then be clear about which is the main 'bet' on which you wager most of your chances, resources and opportunities. The rest have to be tactical plays and 'hedgies', not just in case the bet doesn't pay off, but so you are positioned for the next phase, cover exposed flanks or maintain essential contacts or roles that may be needed in the endgame.

A well-known campaign example based on mapping the *process* of an industry is the 'back-end strategy' pursued by Greenpeace and others against nuclear power. Opposition to nuclear power arises as much from its role in nuclear proliferation (creating waste from which bomb-making plutonium can be produced) as from the radiation dangers of reactors and waste. 'Reprocessing' was started in order to obtain plutonium to make bombs.

The nuclear industry is organized and sees itself as a 'cycle'. It likes to see this as an asset. Its critics tend to see it as a problem.

If 'Fast Breeder' reactors were used they could make more radioactive fuel in the form of plutonium than they started with, so generating a 'plutonium economy' but the cycle has been used to run logic in reverse. For example, to keep reprocessing going to 'handle' waste when in fact, it increases waste, and to create new types of 'fuel'⁵ when there is no shortage of uranium, while justifying it as a way to get rid of plutonium, when plutonium is only produced in reactors – you get the idea.⁶

Instead of attacking nuclear electricity, which is exactly like any other electricity once it is 'downstream', anti-nuclear campaigns have focused on the 'back end': nuclear waste and its human and environmental costs. When householders and citizens have to live with waste, they rightly want to ask hard questions and have guarantees. When you disperse it into the sea or air,⁷ the opportunity to ask useful questions is lost. Back-end strategy gets questions about risk asked now, before the risks are commissioned, rather than years – maybe hundreds or thousands of years – into the future. With dwindling options to dispose of nuclear waste, the industry has had to curb expansion and justify itself to the public in a way that it could always formerly avoid, as long as waste was dumped in the Atlantic Ocean.⁸

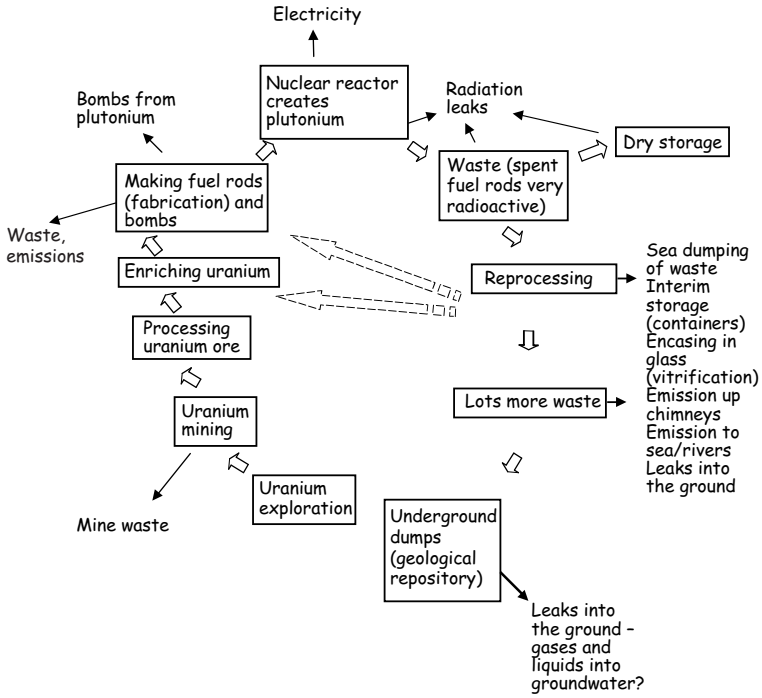


Figure 3.2 Nuclear power issue map

Quantitative research

Use quantitative research to evaluate a campaign

Quantitative market research, often called ‘polling’, tells you how many people say they think something. Popular with politicians and the news media, it makes it easy to tell stories that appear to have authority because they are quantified. This is often taken to be more ‘objective’ and ‘scientific’ than qualitative research, but this is largely false. Indeed, polling is sometimes argued to be an ideological rather than a ‘scientific’ instrument.⁹ By determining what is discussed in the news through commissioning and releasing a poll, as well as deciding the questions, those who can afford to buy polling are able to frame what is important to society.

A more respectable use of quantitative research is a ‘before-and-after’ study to help evaluate a campaign or in communicating with key audiences – for instance, by showing how many other people think something.

Polling can be very persuasive in private lobbying, such as when you have data that relate to the customers of retailers that you want to influence. In 1987, for example, I was working for WWF International, and we were able to provide people close to the owners of the *Daily Mail* with unpublished MORI¹⁰ survey results that showed 26 per cent of the newspaper’s readers wanted more coverage of conservation issues. This figure was higher than that of any of its competitors, and this helped persuade the *Daily Mail* to start campaigning on the environment.¹¹

Quantified data are useful in lobbying, because numbers can be passed around as a fixed ‘fact’ in conversation. Qualitative research is unlikely to make much of an impact in private lobbying unless the target is familiar with the methods, as its results sound like a matter of opinion.

Quantitative research is also useful for broad comparisons within an issue. For instance, Eurobarometer surveys commissioned by the European Commission, and global polls by Environics,¹² based in Canada, reveal something about levels of environmental concern. In each year since 1997, Environics International’s *Environmental Monitor* has reported the views of randomly selected ‘average citizens’ from over 25 countries (it shows, for instance – and contrary to popular assumptions about motivation in the North – that concern is as high if not higher in most developing countries).

Qualitative research

Use qualitative research to understand why people think the way they do

This sets out to understand how and *why* people think the way they do. It can appear as ‘soft’ research, but you should resist the idea that qualitative research is less objective because it lacks numbers: quantification often lends a wholly spurious air of objectivity. Qualitative research may also inconveniently reveal that people don’t think the way we’d like them to, and this may become a reason to resist doing it. Reject this idea!

At its simplest, qualitative research could mean conducting your own straw poll or, like Mass Observation of the 1950s, eavesdropping on the bus. Talking to colleagues, friends or relatives is, however, a very unreliable way of discerning motivations. Answers are heavily coloured by who is asking the question, and the respondents' relationship with the questioner.

Done well by experienced moderators, qualitative research is expensive but well worth it. Cheap qualitative research, however, tends to be useless or, worse, misleading. Before embarking on buying qualitative research it's a good idea to read up on the subject, look on the web¹³ and take recommendations from people in your line of work.

Here's a list of why it's hard to understand motivation, from George Silverman and Eve Zukergood of Market Navigation:¹⁴

- People often do not understand why they are doing the things they are doing, and therefore can't tell you
- Even when they do understand why they are doing things, they don't want to tell you
- When they do tell you, they often don't tell you the truth, or the whole truth. Or, they tell you more than the truth
- It is more important for most people to preserve their view of themselves than tell you why they are doing what they are doing
- There is rarely a single reason why a given person does something. Any simple, single act of behaviour is usually the result of many complex forces from inside and outside the individual
- The same act of behaviour can be motivated by different things in different people. Members of the same group, performing the same task at the same time, may have vastly different motivations
- The same person will do the same thing at different times for different motivations
- Some motivations, even if you find them out, are often irrelevant to marketing, in that you can do little, if anything, about them. These may involve motivations based upon deep fears, pathology or illegal activities
- Yet motivations are extremely important for the marketer to understand, particularly those centring around fundamental beliefs, values, tastes and emotions.

'The best way' they say, 'to find out about motivation is by inferring the causes of behaviour from people's thoughts and actions. The worst way, often, is to ask them, "Why did you do it?"'

Take a product such as fish fingers. If you ask men why they buy fish fingers they may say that they are convenient, easy to cook, nutritious, covered in breadcrumbs, and so on. But the real reason,¹⁵ which you need a deeper method of study to uncover, might be that it gives them social ‘permission’ to sit down with their kids to eat – in other words, to be a child again.

When my Greenpeace team was researching a campaign on ozone depletion in the 1990s, we found that, while people were quite prepared to accept that it was a serious problem and believed there might be evidence of a link to skin cancer, many were less willing to accept that commercial chemicals had to be banned as a result. Activists strongly agreed that ICI, a major British chemical company, was to blame,¹⁶ but more typical public groups were reluctant to consider measures that might damage ICI, which was seen as a rare example of British industrial achievement.

Greenpeace tested different ways of talking about chemicals – about ‘holes in the sky’ or ‘pepperpots’ (lots of small holes), or edges of holes or expanding holes (all versions of reality). What finally turned out to motivate many of the younger women in the test groups was the threat to their holidays. The idea that ICI might be endangering their chance to sunbathe for two weeks was enough to blow away any concerns they might have for the profitability of the chemicals giant.

Research also showed that people were not surprised that solar electricity could power light bulbs (the standard demonstration used by campaigners), but believed that for ‘hard work’, such as washing clothes, other forms of electricity would be needed. So Greenpeace built a solar-powered kitchen containing a washing machine and cooker and toured it around shopping centres on the back of a truck.

Silverman and Zukergood emphasize the need for research within ‘an atmosphere of psychological safety, about what [people] do – not why they do it – and how they feel about what they do’. Conventionally, the best way to do this is in a focus group¹⁷ moderated by a psychologist. They noted: ‘People get caught up in the spirit of the group’ and when they discover others who are sympathetic, ‘these other people quickly cease to be strangers, yet they aren’t friends, family or co-workers. They begin to pour out information, opinions and feelings that they would not ordinarily share with most other people.’

Investigating conversation potential

Stimulate the
need for action
despite
uncertainties

To reach ‘cross-over’, where new audiences discuss new ideas, and for campaign propositions to acquire the velocity to escape from old assumptions, campaigns need to become a lively ‘conversation in society’. Doing that is hard if people are disinterested, and a potent new form of disinterest is the instant opinion. In a world where everyone begins to deconstruct messages – to ask who is behind it? how was it put together? how did it get here and why? – having an instant view about any proposition short-circuits most attempts to stimulate that conversation in society (witness the failures of politicians’ attempts to launch ‘big conversations’ or stir up ‘national debates’).

This is bad news for campaigns. People have an increasing number of mental off-switches they can use to disengage with. Yet some things still bother them enough to form the conversation ‘everyone is talking about’, on the bus, at the rail station in phone-ins and, as qualitative researcher John Scott notes, in the queue at the chip shop.

So an important test for a campaign proposition (see Chapter 6) is whether or not it passes the chip shop queue test – does it stimulate that conversation? The magic ingredient, says Scott, is dilemmas: hard-to-resolve things that nag at us and we can’t put down – hence they keep the conversation (read, campaign) going.

‘Campaigns work,’ he says,¹⁸ ‘according to the number of discussions they generate by two people who have nothing to do with it. In such moments people say things like “it’s brilliant someone’s doing that”, or they pass on a factoid; they share something they didn’t realize about the world. This is when campaigns achieve leverage: because things become currency. This effect is usually much bigger than a few people taking a lot of action.’

Rather than trying to test campaign propositions, Scott argues that campaigners would do better to use qualitative research to create an ‘atlas of understanding’ for an issue, and then look for and test out dilemmas. To do this he uses ‘constructor groups’, in which people are encouraged to effectively take on the role of researchers themselves by being given a brief and sent out to solve a communications problem, test it with friends and relations, amend and present it back.

‘Get people to create something and sell it to you – that way you can challenge them, they challenge each other and you can better understand what they really think about something,’ Scott says. ‘As a result, they are confident enough to give you access to things that are not resolvable. Otherwise, they feel they must give you answers that add up.’

So don’t try to shut down all uncertainty and ambiguity in campaign propositions, but stimulate the need for action despite paradoxes and ethical options that cannot be weighed or equated, even while uncertainties cannot be resolved. The UK government ‘drink-driving’ (anti-alcohol) campaigns are interesting, observes Scott, because ‘they make people disapprove of each other’. They make it impossible to think ‘the government’s to blame’: a thought that ‘insulates people from dilemmas and irreconcilable things’.

He believes that one reason the Brent Spar issue resonated for so long is that it ‘stimulated ongoing debate about whether Greenpeace should even have done it’. Something, as he points out, ‘that you were unlikely to have ever discovered by research based on the campaign structure (the campaign plan)’. But, he suggests, if you had asked about dumping waste at sea and about corporate responsibility, then your atlas might have showed a potential for powerful ambivalences to collide. ‘It’s the gossip in the chip shop queue effect: the issue of whether the government is lying is actually more interesting to discuss than whether sea-dumping is a good idea.’

Using networks

A few years ago, statisticians worked out that we were ‘just six handshakes’ away from anyone in the world. Some say it’s only four handshakes.¹⁹ Studies of the internet and many other networks show the number of links needed tends to be even lower. This so-called ‘small-world’ effect may be bad news for disease transmission, but it helps explain how the public affairs industry works. Once you are in contact with a few people in an industry or political system, they are likely to be able to reach everyone else in it rather easily.

Most of the connections you need are closer than you might think

Add human chemistry, and networks can deliver real punch. This is one reason why experienced international lobbyists go to such lengths to ‘network’ and press for changes in national policy positions even right down to the wire, hoping that personal pressure will win some shift in position at the last minute. Sometimes it works; most delegations have some scope for concessions, and many ministers can call on favours with their political bosses if they really need to get out of a situation they feel personally uncomfortable with. Many love the dramas of last-minute deals.

Supporters are often undervalued by NGOs. Chances are that most of the connections you need are closer at hand than you might think. Campaigns tend to be networks, with a disproportionate number of links to others. Many of the targets you may be after will tend to be in the minority of highly connected nodes that are over-influential in ‘scale-free’ networks.²⁰ Simply checking around your own network may uncover many useful links, and contacts of colleagues and supporters will reach into entirely new ones.

Families, too, are an important factor. Being lobbied by your sons or daughters is far more uncomfortable than being got at on a nine-to-five basis by professional pressure groups, PR agencies or political opponents. You may not know the chief executive officer (CEO) or brand manager or a minister, but do you know someone who does, or someone who might know someone who does? Use networks to their full advantage, but never ‘hostage’ private relationships and intrude unfairly.

Qualitative evidences

Ensure the audience sees the evidence

It is often more useful to show presence – or absence – from visual evidence rather than resorting to statistics. ‘Evidences’ are things people take as signs of something being true, or being the case. An egg frying on a pavement, for example – ‘it’s very hot’.

In one campaign, research²¹ showed that segments of the UK public were aware of the depletion of the ozone layer and the link to ultraviolet light and skin cancer, but this information was beginning to lose its effect because it was ‘not of their world’, and nobody they knew was getting skin cancer. These would have been ‘evidences’ that warnings about the risks were indeed valid. Similarly, at that time the ice caps weren’t seen to be melting; hence people were ambivalent

about global warming. In another study, one person cited seeing Antarctic cod in a supermarket as evidence of globalization being real.

The important point is that these perceptions reflect the issue as constructed from existing perceptions, not from the viewpoint of campaigners or experts.

What's the expectation; what's understood as evidence that something is getting worse or could improve? How can you make sure that the relevant audience sees that evidence, maybe not just once but in a series of 'evidences'? Find out through research.

Choosing media and communication channels

_____ Horses for _____ Different types of media are best used for different aspects of communication. Table 3.1 is based on my own experience.

_____ courses _____ Media such as advertising can reach a mass audience but carry only simple information. At the other extreme, face-to-face communication, such as at public events, can reach a relatively small audience but can handle greater complexity, while direct marketing and editorial are intermediate.²²

The immediate impact (remember, of course, that this is not the same as long-term influence) of different media is probably something like this (in descending order):

- face-to-face (the 'sender' communicates with you directly);
- group (the sender communicates with a group directly);
- an event that just happens;
- a clearly organized public event/meeting;
- cinema or virtual reality;
- TV;
- photography (still pictures or large images/objects such as art installations);
- internet (with a degree of interactivity);
- internet (non-interactive);
- radio (but it can be extremely powerful as a form of one-on-one, especially when the content is an issue that requires reflection or is very personal. Radio is generally the most under-rated medium);
- print (not enough thought usually goes into using print – magazines that end up lying around in waiting rooms, for instance, have a valuable staying power if they contain interesting features).

Table 3.1 *Using different types of media for different aspects of communication*

<i>Medium</i>	<i>Best uses</i>	<i>Less good for</i>
Film/video (i.e. commissioned video) and non-broadcast	Persuasion, emotions, feelings and stories, speaker support and group discussion	Information
Reportage (being reported by the media)	Endorsement	Engagement, recruitment
Newspaper reports	Establishing a campaign or project – matter of record, logging milestones, reaching political and corporate decision-makers	Persuasion
News websites	A record and archive (if maintained long term, e.g. BBC)	Social intrusion
TV news	Events, awareness, reaching status-conscious decision-makers, internal communication	Information, sensitive topics, reflection or messages that should be segmented
TV documentaries	Depth treatment, stories	Time-critical work
Local newspapers	How-to information for the home. Case studies and human interest stories which people can believe	Reaching young people (in most cases)
Advertisements, e.g. posters	Reinforcement, awareness	Information, persuasion
Advertisements in special interest magazines including women's, etc.	Reinforcement, awareness, cross-support to editorial or features, segmented messaging	Reaching wider audiences
Text – print	Information, reference, stories	Persuasion
Radio news	Breaking news (i.e. urgent)	A record
Radio general	Human interest, stories, reflection	Launches, events
Radio strand or specialist programmes	Segmented messaging and discussion of problems and opportunities	Reaching wider audiences

Table 3.1 *continued*

<i>Medium</i>	<i>Best uses</i>	<i>Less good for</i>
Radio advertising	Reinforcement (very cheap and can be targeted for certain audiences or localities by listenership)	Reaching 'decision-makers'
Human interaction, face-to-face (PR)	Persuasion, changing views	Large-scale recruitment
Events (to which people are invited or can attend)	Inspiration, integration (multimedia)	Reaching disinterested audiences
Tailored briefings by invitation or side meetings at conferences, etc.	Informing professionals and stakeholders, persuasion	Anything else (high cost)
Exhibitions and receptions	Introductions, making new contacts	Information
3-D	Reinforcement, events	Information
Entertainment activities, e.g. sports events, concerts	Awareness of an issue in new specific audience	Information, persuasion
Internet websites	Reference information, narrowcasting, network-building	Endorsement
E-mail (interactive)	Data, network updating, mobilizing existing contacts; networks	Persuasion, establishment, networking
Texting (interactive)	Updating, awareness	Information
Ambient	Awareness for groups that do not use other media, media-wary, or media-saturated	Networking, information
Stories, written or verbal	Changing minds	Information, pressure
Showbooks and laptop computer presentations	Small group persuasion, training, speaker support with small groups	Anything else

As well as media that can't be purchased, such as news or features, campaigns may want to use media that can be bought. Some may be glamorous and worth doing as a morale booster (a film with high production values, for example) to increase the 'presence' of the campaign. Few are as effective as face-to-face or edited communication (such as magazines and radio). This is why commercial PR (designed mostly to stimulate press coverage) has undergone a boom at the expense of advertising. The more 'paid for' a message is, and the less unsupported by surrounding and reinforcing free messages, the less it will be trusted.

'Ambient' means 'around you' and is an attempt to get messages out of obviously paid-for slots and onto the street or any other public space, bodies or any place that can be used. It works best while it's new.

Allies, decision-makers and opponents

Identify key audiences

Who's who, and what's what? Checking through the opponents, decision-makers and allies helps identify key audiences. A campaign might come down to wanting to know how to influence one individual, or even to influence one individual to influence another.

- Mapping individual contacts – a PR company favourite. Who knows who, and in what circumstances do they meet? Draw in your target person and then draw connections to those she or he knows, and who they know, and so on. Often you need to reach a series of 'audiences' to secure a chain of events
- Winners and losers – as it stands now, and as it will if your campaign succeeds – make a list; brainstorm; be prepared for strange bedfellows
- Where do costs and benefits fall and how might that be changed? For example, a well-known problem arises in energy efficiency if home-owners benefit from installing insulation (lower bills) but landlords have to pay for it
- Where is value added and profit made in a production chain?

- Don't assume beneficiaries will understand the campaign. They probably won't be expecting it – approach them directly or indirectly
- Potential allies may want to remain hidden. Possible exposure may shift them from complete inaction to giving a private help or useful intelligence
- Don't demand a lot at first – some will be quite happy to be counted as supporting you – for example in letter writing to newspapers – but are unlikely to do more. However, even that much may convert an invisible majority into a visible one
- Political, social or commercial competitors are potential allies. Credit-takers are another. Politicians who may finally put their imprint on the decision, even if they do little or nothing to force it to happen, and journalists who may 'discover' the issue with information you have fed to them, are also beneficiaries. Don't forget that there may also be people riding on their coat-tails, who may be even more ambitious for their success.