

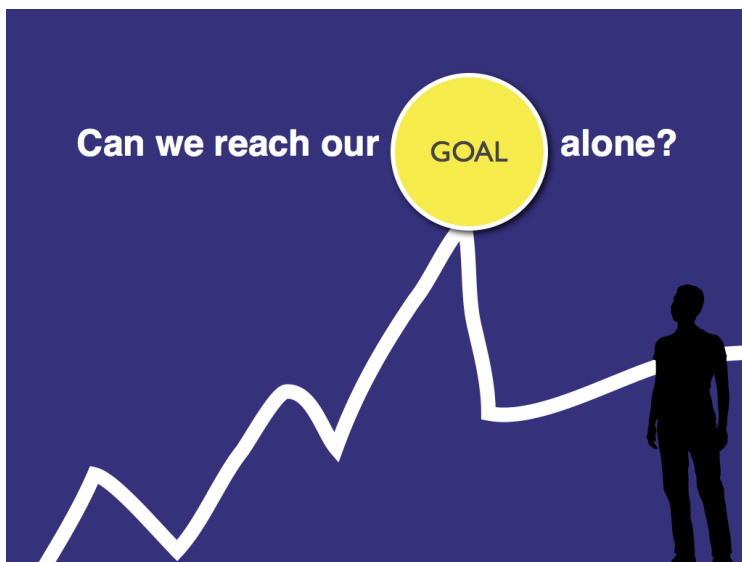
GETTING COMMITMENT

“How do I engage others in Action?”

HOW CAN WE ENGAGE IN EFFECTIVE ACTION?

Since our power comes from our relationships with others and our shared resources together, we are weakened if we are not constantly inviting others to join us in meaningful, purposeful work.

COMMITMENT



Getting into action requires that leaders engage others to make explicit **commitments** to achieve specific, measurable outcomes. We know that we cannot achieve our goals on our own. We need others to join us. When Martin Luther King marched from Selma to Montgomery, he did not march alone; 600 other committed marchers joined him. In fact, Dr. King did not conceive of the march, but was brought in by the organizers who reached out to him and got a commitment!

Getting clear commitments from others is essential. So why don't we always just ask? We are sometimes worried of burdening others, sometimes worried that they will say no and we'll feel rejected, and sometimes we are worried that they'll say yes and we'll then have to become more committed ourselves! Remember though, that when you became involved, it was probably because someone asked you. **In fact, when we ask someone to join us, we are often giving him or her the opportunity to engage in the meaningful action and purposeful life that most people crave.**

The path to meaningful commitments

FOLLOW THE YELLOW 4 Cs

THE FOUR 'CCs

So how do we engage others and secure commitment? When asking for commitments, it is essential that we use clear, concise language. Asking for commitments involves four straightforward principles of conversation:

- 1) **Connect:** Let the person know who you are, why you care about this issue, and ask them how they have been affected.
- 2) **Context:** Explain how the action you are asking them to take is important. Be specific about the challenges we face, but also the opportunities and hope. Ask questions to draw out the other person's anger and hope about this issue.
- 3) **Commitment:** Explicitly ask the other person if you can count on them to engage in action with you. Be very specific about the date, time, and place.
 - a. "Can we count on you to join us in _____?"
 - b. "Will you join me in doing _____?"

LISTEN CAREFULLY. Is the answer "Yes! Definitely!" or "Maybe . . ." or "No, I'm sorry."

- 4) **Catapult:** If someone says "yes" then give them the respect of having real work and real responsibility at your action. Ask:
 - a. Can you bring something to the event (i.e. food, posters, etc.)
 - b. Can we meet for a 1-to-1 before the event?
 - C.** Can you commit to bringing 2 friends with you?

Remember, when we invite others to engage with us in action we invite them to find purpose in action and solidarity with others.

Part of enabling others to achieve purpose through action is committing to the full recruitment cycle:

- 1) **Recruit** others and get a commitment to action.
- 2) **Confirm** the commitment a few days out. Check in and see if the people who committed need a ride, can invite others, or can take responsibility for part of the action.

3) **Confirm** the day before the action. Provide full details on the place, time and purpose of the action, including any updates on the agenda or attendees.

4) **Confirm** one more time 30-60 minutes before the action—the period when we’re all most likely to find something more urgent to do. Convey how excited you are to have others join you in action.

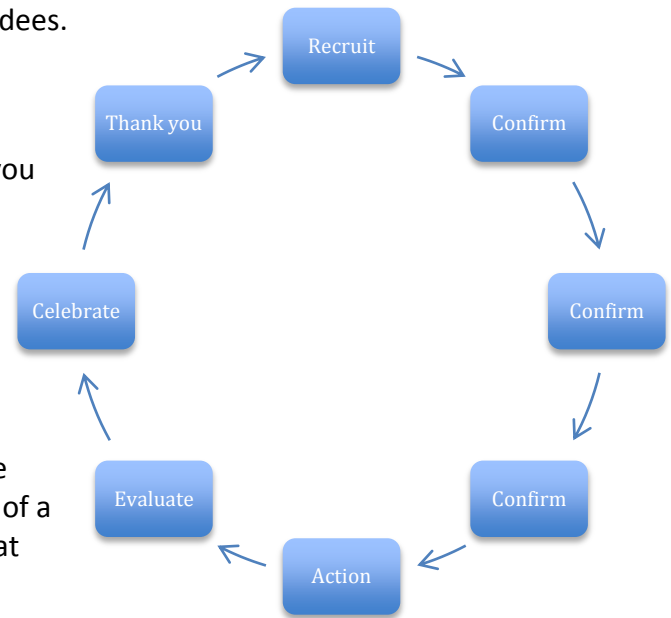
5) **ACTION!** Lead a motivational action that respects others’ time, but also provides full training, opportunities for relationship building, and purposeful, measurable action.

6) **Evaluate** the action together. Tally up all measurable outcomes so that everyone can see that they’re part of a bigger whole. Debrief in detail what worked and what should change next time.

7) **Celebrate** together. Who wants to spend their free time without having fun?! Generate routines for how people in your organization celebrate together, perhaps with food, music or a round of stories from the day.

8) **Thank** everyone the next day for his or her participation in action. Tell them specifically what impact the action had in the campaign. Ask for their input on what worked and what should be changed next time.

9) **Recruit** participants by signing them up to move to the next level of leadership, helping you and your team plan more actions in their city or neighborhood.



WORKSHEET:

CREATING A PHONE SCRIPT

The keys in a recruitment script are that you **ask questions** to understand the motivations of the person you're calling, that your story included something about **you**, and **why you're motivated to act**; you tell a little bit about **who your group is**, and **why they've come together now to work** on this; and **present the choice** that your listener has to make – join us at our upcoming action.

Don't worry about getting it exactly right; your phone calls will each be different anyway – they should be conversational and respond to your listener, not overly scripted or formal. But here is a good list of sample talking points that you can use to orient yourself.

YOUR SCRIPT:

Hi, my name is _____, and I'm a leader with _____.

1) CONNECTION: Key questions to ask to get conversation going (remember to LISTEN):

Key aspects of your own experience that reveal your motivation to do this work:

2) CONTEXT: Details about who your group is, the exact challenges that move you to action right now, the real hope, and a strategic choice. Questions that can draw out the anger and hope.

3) COMMITMENT: Getting commitment: We're holding _____ action on DATE, TIME, LOCATION. Will you join me there?

- Who else can you suggest I contact?
- Confirm the DATE, TIME, LOCATION. Can I count on you to be there?

4) CATAPULT:

What specific skills, resources and responsibilities do you need covered to make your action successful? List them all here. As people commit to join you remember to give them real responsibility for a part of the action's success.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Marshall Ganz [and others -- see acknowledgements below], [Organizers Toolkit](#); this training program includes the information included in this document as well as more organizer tools.
- Richard Hackman, “Designing Work for Individuals and for Groups”, adapted from J.R. Hackman, *Work Design* in J.R. Hackman & J.L. Suttle (Eds.) *Improving Life at work: Behavioral science approaches to organizational change*. Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing Company, 1977. (pp. 242-255).
- Jacques Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, Prologue, (pp. xxi-xxv).
- Pamela Oliver and Gerald Marwell, *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, Chapter 11, “Mobilizing Technologies for Collective Action,” (pp 251-271).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We welcome you to use this document and adapt it for your own trainings, subject to the restrictions below. This workshop guide has been developed over the course of many trainings by Liz Pallatto, Joy Cushman, Jake Waxman, Devon Anderson, Rachel Anderson, Adam Yalowitz, Kate Hilton, Lenore Palladino, New Organizing Institute staff, MoveOn Organizers, Center for Community Change staff, Jose Luis Morantes, Carlos Saavedra, Sean Thomas-Breitfeld, Shuya Ohno, Petra Falcon, Michele Rudy, Hope Wood, Kristen Dore and many others.

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