

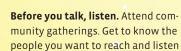
TOOLS FOR A POPULIST UPRISING

Ready to collaborate across Red and Blue? Here are some ways to get started.

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HOW TO CROSS THE DIVIDE



Discuss things that connect you,

to their hopes and fears.

like being a parent or dealing with high gas prices, to build trust before bringing up issues that might spark disagreement.

Highlight others' points of view. For example, talk about how an Afghani villager feels about us attacking their country.

Avoid attacks on politicians or others who hold different views, and the United States.

Focus on why the issues matter

to you. Speak from your heart and experience.

Avoid jargon-filled language. Ask yourself if you come across as friendly or as a know-it-all.

Avoid emphasizing problems. Suggest actions people can take, and talk about examples of success.

Source: article by Doug Orbaker.

Find a newsworthy angle on your event or cause. Human interest, controversy, civil disobedience, superlatives (first, biggest) help.

Create a short press release. Make it accessible and factual, with contact information.

Find journalists who cover issues related to your own.

Develop a 30-second pitch for your story. Don't lie or exaggerate—build a reputation for accuracy.

Highlight previous coverage of your issue when pitching your story.

Identify knowledgeable and articulate spokespeople. An unexpected spokesperson (a veteran for peace or a doctor for single-payer health care) can be especially interesting to a journalist.

Don't give up if a journalist isn't interested. Correct them if they get the story wrong, and thank those who cover it well.



Identify a goal that is widely shared, for example, increased support for education. Avoid taking positions on unrelated issues; learn to respectfully "agree to disagree" on topics not essential to your purpose.

Research potential allies who share your concerns, including religious, political, civic, and neighborhood groups.

Explore participants' interest and concerns about collaborating, and explore ways to address both.

Structure decision making so that power is shared among coalition members and timely action is possible.

Clarify your plan. Set short-term and long-term goals. Choose among strategy options: large, public campaigns, behind-the-scenes lobbying, popular education, etc.

Encourage coalition partners to reach out to their own network of friends and allies to widen support.

HOW TO §

BUILD TRUST



Offer reciprocal liberty. Each of us relies on society's commitment to freedom to assure our own liberty. I'll respect your liberty if you'll respect mine.

Remember that diversity includes diversity you don't like. Treat your opposition with fairness and respect, as potential allies rather than as certain enemies.

Bust a few stereotypes, and start thinking about somebody else's problems. You'll make new friends and change others' view of you. Gays against pension cutbacks, women for drug reform, blacks for small business, whatever.

Use short-term, easier wins to build momentum for the difficult issues that may take years to get.

Describe a future worth fighting for. Optimism is deeply ingrained in American culture. We need to point out what's wrong without simultaneously casting a pall over others' vision of the future.

Source: Sam Smith at prorev.com

HOW TO

TAKE DIRECT ACTION



Direct action can bring people together while raising awareness. Here, for example, is a model developed by City Life/Vida Urbana for protesting foreclosures:

Seek advice from an organization that provides legal advice and support for those facing foreclosure.

Canvass the neighborhood to find support. Tell the story of the family involved, and explain how a foreclosure harms the community.

Warn the bank that a protest is planned. Send out press releases.

Gather neighbors, family, friends, faith groups, and organization members at the house for the scheduled foreclosure. Hold signs and use a megaphone to tell the story of the homeowner.

If successful in thwarting the foreclosure, use the extra time to negotiate with the lender.

Source: City Life/Vida Urbana



E-MAIL LISTS

To keep members of your group informed, set up a listserve (find them at riseup.net or Google). Listserves allow people to subscribe, unsubscribe, and share files easily.

WRITE EFFECTIVE E-MAILS

- Get the reader's attention with an interesting hook.
- Make the text straightforward, not wordy, and break it up with bullet points and short paragraphs.
- Include everything the reader needs to take action and ask recipients to forward the e-mail.
- Limit e-mails to once every couple of weeks, except during a campaign climax.

HOW TO BLOG

Post short, confident pieces on a single subject. Update frequently, and reference your e-mails, along with information on how to subscribe to your e-mail list. Free blogging sites include: www.blogger.com, www. wordpress.com, and www.sixapart. com/typepad.

OTHER USES OF NEW MEDIA

Share photos on Flickr or videos on YouTube. You can link to these shared images from your website, blog, or e-mails.

Read more about How to Break Through the Red/Blue Divide in the Fall 2008 issue of YES! Magazine, Purple America.

Back copies at YesMagazine.org/store

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