

Worksheet: Answering the Three Key Questions

The best advocacy tactics and strategies in the world will miss their mark unless they are always pointing towards the Three Key Questions.

1. What do I want?
2. Why do I want it?
3. Who has the power to give it to me?

This is not just true at the start of a campaign, but throughout the campaign, because the answer to #3 can change often and your strategies must change as well. In the Power Prism® framework, these Three Key Questions function as an advocate's North Star, because we need to direct our limited time and resources to influencing those with the power to give us what we want at every step along the way.

How do you answer the Three Key Questions?

1. What do you want?

What is the specific policy or systems change you are seeking to improve a person's likelihood of experiencing body confidence and/or to prevent eating disorders?

2. Why do you want it?

2a. Describe the problem you are trying to address – using published data, when possible.

2b. What is your personal motivation for pursuing this policy change? How has this issue impacted your life or the lives of people you know?

3. Who has the power to give it to you?

3a. Who are the legislative leaders at the very top of the decision-making body considering your bill in your state or city? This could be the senate president, house speaker and possibly the governor – or city council president and mayor if local.

3b. Who are the committee chairs in the committee to which your bill is assigned?

3c. If the committee of jurisdiction has a subcommittee that will consider your bill first, who chairs that subcommittee?

Once you've answered the Three Key Questions, it's time to do some **Pathways of Influence** research to help you understand what makes these people tick so you can tailor your advocacy accordingly.

Questions to Help You Understand the Policy-Making Process in Your Area

Once you have decided you want to take action, you'll need to determine the best process for changing policy and whether your efforts should be focused on local, county, or state policy change or regulation. Most cities, towns, counties, and states have an official clerk's office and some staff that can respond to your inquiry. Here are some talking points and questions to ask when you contact their office.

- Hello. My name is *[your full name]* and I live on *[street address/town]*.
- If you are a student, or teacher, mention the name of your school.
- I am very concerned about _____ and would like to do something here in *[town, city, county, or state]* to *[goal of policy]*.
- I was hoping someone could explain the process for passing such a policy here in *[town, city, county, or state]* and if that is even possible.
- Do I need an elected official to sponsor this proposal or are citizens allowed to bring these issues forward for consideration by themselves? What is the most successful method?
- Are co-sponsors allowed? Are they limited in number? What is the process for adding a co-sponsor to the bill?
- Is there a specific committee that would typically review an issue like this? If so, might you recommend someone I could speak with on that committee?
- I have model policy language that has been used elsewhere. Might there be someone who could look at it to let me know how it would need to be customized to work here in *[town, city, county, or state]*?
- Is there a specific timeline for filing legislation? I would like to get any information I can about the official timeline, key dates, and process for consideration – including any committee review, public hearings, or votes.
- Last question – can you give me any examples of laws that have passed in the last few years that might be similar in their intention to protect public health? (You could learn a lot from talking to other advocates that have achieved policy change in your community, so you will want to follow up with them for some tips!)

Worksheet: Pathways of Influence

"If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect." ~Benjamin Franklin

Think back to the Three Key Questions. Knowing which individual lawmakers, specifically, have the power to give you what you want is critical. Once you figure that out, it is time to learn as much about that person as you can from public sources and conversations with people who might know them personally or professionally.

Your research will uncover valuable "pathways of influence" to this lawmaker and will dramatically improve your ability to appeal to them based on their own motivated self-interest. Sometimes this is called "target research."

Use this worksheet to get you started. Once you have done some research, share your findings with others in your coalition and invite them to cross-reference the data with their own volunteers, staff, and members to see if they can uncover any relevant relationships. For example, your research might uncover that the lawmaker's children attend a particular elementary school, their spouse is a pediatrician, there's a Boys & Girls Club in their district and they are on the board of the state conference of the NAACP. All of those facts may become pathways of influence if you look for connections – and then follow through on them! If you'd like to learn even more about this technique, check out [Pathways of Influence: Steps to turn a little bit of knowledge into a whole lotta power.](#)

HELPFUL HINT- Here are several general resources you can use to find pathways of influence:

- Google search and Google news search
- State legislative websites
- Campaign websites
- Press releases (from their legislative web page or campaign website)
- Social media accounts

Your name:

Date:

Which lawmaker are you researching?

What office do they hold?

How long has the lawmaker been in the legislature?

What committee assignments do they have?

What is their party affiliation?

Is this legislator in the majority party in your state?

☐ Majority in State Senate ☐ Majority in House of Representatives/Assembly ☐ Same party as Governor

How long has the person been in the legislature?

What community do they live in?

What is a brief description of the community? ([Wikipedia](#) usually has a blurb on every city and town that you can reach from the search function.)

Population size:

Location within state, if noted:

Colleges/universities in the community:

Do they ever hold office hours in the district to meet with constituents? If so, when are those office hours?

What does/did the lawmaker do, professionally, besides serving in the legislature?

What information did you find about their family members?

Does the lawmaker have any hobbies, volunteer activities, or pet issues that you could find?

What community organizations seem to be important to them and why?

Which organizations have given an award to the lawmaker?

If they participate in organized religion, what is the name of the place they worship?

Look them up on Facebook. What does their profile tell you? Do you have any “Friends” in common? If they post, what are they generally posting about?

Do they use any of these social media platforms?

___ Facebook

___ Twitter

___ LinkedIn

___ Instagram

If so, what do you learn about them from looking at what they have posted?

Google their name + key terms related to the campaign and see if you learn anything interesting. For example, Google legislator's name along with terms like those listed below and see if you get any hits. These hits might give you some insight into common ground you might have with this lawmaker.

Eating disorders	Advertising
Body confidence	Marketing
Body positivity	Photoshop
Anorexia or bulimia	Weight discrimination
Obesity	Hair or skin tone discrimination
Weight loss supplements	Mental health
Diet pills	Women's or child health
Youth sports	Muscle-building supplement
Youth leadership	Teen substance abuse
Kidney or liver disease	Anabolic steroid use

Based on everything you have learned through your research, what do you think might persuade this lawmaker to support your legislation?

This is a sample campaign plan for the initial stages of a statewide effort to pass legislation that would prohibit the sale of weight-loss supplements and muscle-building supplements to anyone under the age 18. It's just a sample. Please be creative when localizing it!

Policy Advocacy Objective:

To prohibit the sale of weight-loss supplements and muscle-building supplements to children under the age of 18 and to require that these products be placed behind the counter in retail settings.

Research & Policy Development Activities	Person(s) responsible	Due date	Outcome
Assemble the key data you will need to explain why this legislation is important and how your policy intervention will help solve that problem. Make sure the data you rely on is current, that it is racially and ethnically inclusive, and that it is vetted by your lead coalition organizations.			
Solicit testimonials from health care providers and support group leaders about their professional experience and observations of how young people's physical health and mental health are vulnerable to the aggressive marketing of the diet and muscle-building industries and how easy access to these products contributes to poor health and distorted body image ideals.			
Research the process for filing legislation in your state including key dates/deadlines, rules on sponsorship and co-sponsorship, and drafting legislation.			
Research which committee your bill would likely be assigned to first and if there is any way to influence that assignment to get it sent to a committee that is already friendly to your organization and/or issue.			
Determine which lawmakers are the MOST critical to influence in order for you to have success. These key decision-makers often include leadership, such as the house speaker, senate president, chairs of the committee with jurisdiction over your bill, and house and senate majority leaders in some states. Ask a lobbyist to help you decide on a very small number of key decision-makers for you to prioritize.			
If a similar bill has been filed in past sessions, research the public records to learn how the legislation fared and what was said or submitted as part of the public testimony.			
Using past experience as a guide, learn as much as you can about your likely opponents and the arguments they will probably use both in public and in closed lobbying conversations with legislative leaders. If you're not sure, reach out to colleagues in other states to see what kind of opposition they have faced.			
Coalition Building & Maintenance Activities	Person(s) responsible	Due date	Outcome
Every coalition needs a lead organization and ongoing staff/volunteer support to make sure the campaign planning and execution happens. This organization often will manage any budget related to the campaign, host the campaign website/landing page, schedule meetings, keep communication flowing with partners, funders, and legislative allies throughout the campaign, and manage consultants if there are any. This is important and should not be assumed, but decided upon by partner organizations and clearly articulated so nothing falls between the cracks.			
Produce a list of organizations across the state that are highly likely to support the goals of this legislation.			
Produce a list of organizations across the state that you want/need to support the legislation but that probably do not see this as a priority yet.			
Produce a list of organizations across the state that are relevant and important to those key decision-makers with greatest influence over the fate of your bill. (This will require some "Pathways of Influence" research.)			

Sketch out potential levels of engagement for coalition partner organizations. Those most actively involved may be on a steering committee and be involved in the day-to-day decision-making, some may participate via monthly meetings or conference calls and agree to engage in lobby days and public hearing, and some may simply agree to sign on to a statement of support and agree to receive campaign updates via email.			
If and when the campaign has some funding, it may be that some funds need to be provided to an organization to help support a high level of involvement in the campaign. For example, the state's eating disorder association may be a critical steering committee organization or lead organization but they may not be budgeted to cover staff time to work on campaign. Supporting their advocacy work with additional funding should be a priority.			
Using the campaign one-pager, begin reaching out to prospective coalition partners and include information about different levels of support.			
If you include young people/students in your campaign (and you should!) ask them about the best days and times for them to join coalition calls, trainings, and other campaign activities and work to accommodate their needs.			
Even in small coalitions, it's helpful to establish some <u>operating guidelines</u> - especially around who is empowered to negotiate with lawmakers on proposed changes to the bill and who is empowered to make budget decisions.			
Schedule regular monthly check-ins for the full coalition and put them on the calendar for the duration of the legislative cycle. You can always cancel if there is no news. The steering committee may meet more often. <u>Attached</u> are checklists for both in-person and virtual meetings.			
Fundraising & Development Activities	Person(s) responsible	Due date	Outcome
Whether you are starting your campaign with one organization or a dozen, you'll want to <u>draft a budget</u> to help you identify the costs associated with running a good campaign. Don't worry if you don't have money in the bank. Many of the campaign "costs" are covered by in-kind contributions from your coalition partners who work on the campaign as part of their job roles, or share their office space for free, or perhaps donate lunch for your body confidence day at the state house. But other costs will require some funds to be raised. Your budget should include direct and in-kind costs.			
Time is money. When you look through the many campaign-related activities on this initial campaign kick-off plan, you can imagine how many hours this will take. Who will cover those hours and are they already being compensated for their time by their employer (in-kind contribution); will you need to reimburse them for their time; or will they participate as an unpaid volunteer? These distinctions are important and help manage expectations. Talk about what each <u>organization can give and what they hope to get</u> from participating in the campaign.			
With your communications and development colleagues, develop a brief written case statement for potential funders. Describe the campaign, its goals, partners, legislative support, and momentum. Let them know what your financial needs are and directly ask for support.			
If you are engaging youth/students in your campaign (and you should), plan to provide some compensation to those who commit to a series of deliverables. For example, attending a training, collecting surveys from other youth, contacting their own lawmakers, sharing their story with the media, recruiting other youth advocates, building campaign's social media presence, etc. Young people should be compensated for their valuable time and the lived experience they bring to the campaign. If you have young people willing to serve in the Steering Committee, let them - and pay them!			

Make a list of prospective funders that you can approach with your pitch and budget needs and assign those prospects to members of your coalition. Good prospects might include health organizations, community foundations, civic organizations, businesses that support body confidence, celebrities with aligned values and/local connections.			
Grassroots & Key Contacts Activities	Person(s) responsible	Due date	Outcome
Survey all coalition partner organizations to see if they 1) have home address information of supporters that can easily be sorted by legislative district AND 2) if they are willing to ask supporters to reach out to their lawmakers to advocate for restriction of the sale of weight-loss supplements and muscle-building supplements to children.			
Create a tracking spreadsheet that allows you to see how many potential grassroots advocates you have in each legislative district - both house and senate.			
Once you know who your key lawmakers are, make it a priority to identify grassroots advocates from their district. That includes adult voters, local businesses, local nonprofits, and students.			
Once you know who your key lawmakers are, ask all of your coalition partners, funders, volunteers, and members if they have a personal relationship with any of those key lawmakers. If so, note that person is a "grassstops" advocate of "key contact" to that key lawmaker and they should be engaged to help influence that lawmaker about the bill over time. Key contacts do not need to live in the lawmaker's district. They just need to have a good relationship with that lawmaker and be willing to reach out on behalf of your campaign.			
Develop an email distribution list for your grassroots advocates and plan to communicate with them at least twice a month with campaign updates, interesting and relevant info on body confidence, and requests to take action. This list needs to be warmed up and kept warm so it's ready to spring into action when most needed.			
If you have a list of grassroots advocates AND if your state allows for multiple cosponsors on legislation, consider asking your grassroots advocates to send an email, text, or make a call to their own state senator and representative asking them to cosponsor your bill.			
Early on, offer an advocacy training to all of your coalition partner organizations and their grassroots advocates. People like to understand the purpose, the process, and where they fit in. They also like to see that there is real leadership and that they are not alone in wanting change, but that they are part of a group that is committed to achieving that change together. It's exciting!			
Invite young people to send you screen shots of any social media they see promoting diet pills, teas or other weight-loss or muscle-building products that target kids in ways that harm body confidence - including messages from celebrity influencers. This content can be used in action alerts, in communications with lawmakers, and when alerting the media to how easy it is for the diet industry to reach kids all day through technology.			
Media Advocacy & Communications	Person(s) responsible	Due Date	Outcome
Create a name/brand for your campaign - something you will use throughout and that will be easily identifiable by your grassroots advocates, the media, and lawmakers.			
Develop some messages to recruit organizations and individuals to join your campaign:			
1. One-pager about the need for this legislation (the problem), how the legislation will help (the solution), and the urgency (how they can help)			

2. Email message for coalition partners to send to their grassroots supporters that tells them about the goals of your campaign and asks them to share their personal story about diet pills, teas, and other weight-loss or muscle-building products. Assure them you will never use their story without their consent.			
3. Designate a coalition organization that will host the campaign's information on its website to serve as the website hub for the duration of the campaign. Other organizations can link to it but it will be very helpful if there is only one website for your overall campaign information. If your partner organizations want to be visible, gain their permission to add their logo to the website and all printed materials.			
Using the 27-9-3 tool , develop a few short messages to use when recruiting legislative supporters, coalition partners, grassroots advocates and funders.			
Set up social media accounts for your campaign using the agreed upon campaign name/brand and hashtag. Use the cross-posting function for all - Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are probably sufficient for now. Platforms should be updated as technology changes over time.			
Set up an Instagram account for your campaign and invite young people to send you screen shots of any social media they see promoting diet pills, teas or other weight-loss or muscle-building supplements that target kids in ways that harm body confidence.			
With the help of coalition organizations, develop a robust media contact list to have ready when you need to reach the press. Include statewide and local outlets. Target reporters who cover health, youth, online safety and state house politics as well as columnists. Make sure your media list is diverse and inclusive of communities of color and outlets for audiences for whom English is not their primary language. Include local news outlets that cover the districts served by key lawmakers.			
Decision-Maker Advocacy Activities	Person(s) responsible	Due date	Outcome
Assess which members of the house and senate would be the strongest sponsors of your bill and rank them internally with coalition partners. When considering strength, think about (1) a lawmaker's willingness to be your lead sponsor (2) how available the lawmaker or their staff will be to you, (3) their relationship with legislative leadership, and (4) their connection to leaders of committees likely to hear your bill. If you don't know, ask someone who knows your state house - perhaps a lobbyist for an allied nonprofit.			
Develop and execute an outreach plan to secure a strong sponsor - starting with your top prospect.			
You may not have a paid lobbyist working to help pass your bill and that's okay, but do reach out to staff or contract lobbyists for organizations that have aligned missions to introduce yourself and the campaign, let them know about the bill, and ask if you can touch base from time to time if you have a question about the state house dynamics. Lobbyists who work on behalf of pediatricians, community health centers, school nurses, mental health providers, youth athletics, public health & equity, youth empowerment, and teachers are good prospects.			
When you have a short list of key decision-makers, conduct "Pathways of Influence" research to learn how to influence each of them by appealing to their self-interest. Share your research findings with all coalition partners to identify possible connection points.			
Some state legislatures have caucuses of lawmakers that focus on specific issues and may support or oppose legislation as a full group. If your state has a caucus system, consider how your body confidence/child health issue intersects. For example, caucus topics such as children, mental health, women and girls, Black and Latinx, equity, online safety, public health, etc. If any of the caucuses in your state seem like a good fit, ask them if you can make a presentation to the caucus to discuss your issue and how it impacts the health of children across the state. Work with caucus chairs to follow caucus rules and protocol.			

Look for and create "hero opportunities" for lawmakers who are taking actions that support the ultimate passage of your legislation - and that starts with them signing on to sponsor or co-sponsor your bill. Draft a short letter-to-the-editor (LTE) to send to the lawmaker's local newspaper, thanking them for signing on and including one or two facts that support the need for the bill. Before you submit the LTE, though, ask the lawmaker if they are comfortable having the letter published and share the draft with them. Usually they are thrilled, but it's best to ask first.			
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[INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LOGO HERE]

Dear Honorable Members of the [INSERT LEGISLATIVE BODY HERE],

We the undersigned respectfully request your support of [BILL NUMBER, BILL NAME]. Sponsored by [LEGISLATIVE or CITY COUNCIL SPONSOR(S) NAMES], this important legislation would take a critical step to protect children across the state from the unrealistic and biased beauty ideals that bombard them daily. [BILL NUMBER] offers a tax incentive to cosmetic, apparel, and personal care product companies that pledge to *not digitally alter* skin tone, skin texture, body size, or body shape in their advertisements.

Children's media exposure is soaring, and our kids – who spend an average of 7.5 hours per day on screens for entertainment – need a new front line of defense to their health. The problem includes:

- **Unrealistic images.** Photos can be digitally altered to slim waists, change skin tones, bulk up muscles, and erase blemishes. Digitally altered photos are rampant in sponsored posts from celebrities, YouTubers, and other social media influencers.
- **Racially biased beauty ideals.** Advertisers commonly lighten a Black or Brown person's skin, reinforcing the destructive and racist belief that lighter complexions are preferred.
- **Destructive mental and physical health outcomes for all kids.** Exposure to unrealistic images of beauty has been shown to lead to body dissatisfaction, a risk factor for unhealthy weight control behaviors and eating disorders.
 - Over 50% of teen girls and nearly 40% of teen boys reported unhealthy weight control behaviors in the past year, like taking diet pills, skipping meals, and smoking more cigarettes in order to lose weight, making it clear this is not just a "girl problem." Transgender young people also have higher risk for developing eating disorders than their cisgender peers.
 - Black and Brown children are impacted by eating disorders in similar and sometimes higher rates as white children. For example, Latina adolescent girls are more likely than white girls to exhibit bulimic behavior, such as bingeing and purging, and boys of color across ethnic groups experience more bulimic behavior than do white boys.

While a tax incentive will not eliminate digitally altered ads, it can result in powerful new allies, create corporate models of social responsibility, heighten youth awareness, and put pressure on advertisers and influencers who continue altering images. We hope that we can count on you for your support of [BILL NUMBER] to build a new line of defense for youth in [YOUR STATE or CITY] growing up in a digital world. Please contact us at [YOUR EMAIL] with any questions.

Thank you for your support,
[YOUR NAME, JOB TITLE, ORGANIZATION]
[NAMES, TITLES, ORGANIZATIONS OF PARTNERS IN THIS WORK]

[LOGOS OF ORGANIZATIONS OR COMPANIES SIGNING ON TO THIS LETTER]

[INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LOGO HERE]

Dear Honorable Members of the [INSERT LEGISLATIVE BODY HERE],

We the undersigned respectfully request your support of [BILL NUMBER, BILL NAME]. Sponsored by [LEGISLATIVE or CITY COUNCIL SPONSOR(S) NAMES], this important legislation would protect children across the state by preventing the sale of weight-loss supplements and muscle-building supplements to youth under the age of 18. It would also ensure these products are kept behind the counter or in a locked case.

The weight-loss and muscle-building supplements industries target young people. Using celebrity endorsers and other social media influencers – who often digitally alter images – they promise “quick fixes” for the body dissatisfaction brought on by unrealistic images. Yet these products are not proven effective, and worse, can be dangerous.

- **Not recommended by AAP or screened by FDA.** The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly cautions against teens using weight-loss or muscle-building supplements. The Food and Drug Administration does not screen supplements sold over the counter for safety or efficacy.
- **Laced with dangerous substances.** Weight-loss and muscle-building supplements have been found to be laced with pesticides, heavy metals, anabolic steroids, and prescription pharmaceuticals that can cause strokes, cancer, and severe liver injury, which sometimes require transplants or cause death.
- **Leads to steroid use and eating disorders.** Weight-loss and muscle-building supplements are gateways to eating disorders and anabolic steroid abuse. Young men who take creatine and other similar substances are *three times* more likely to start using anabolic steroids in just a few years. Adolescent and young adult women who use diet pills have *six times* the risk of being diagnosed with an eating disorder within the next three years compared to non-users.

Restricting the sale of these deceptive and potentially harmful products to children will help build a new line of defense for our youth growing up in a digital world. We hope that we can count on you for your support of [BILL NUMBER] to protect young people in [YOUR STATE or CITY]. Please contact us at [YOUR EMAIL] with any questions.

Thank you for your support,
[YOUR NAME, JOB TITLE, ORGANIZATION]
[NAMES, TITLES, ORGANIZATIONS OF PARTNERS IN THIS WORK]

[LOGOS OF ORGANIZATIONS OR COMPANIES SIGNING ON TO THIS LETTER]

Worksheet: Developing a Youth Survey

A youth survey is an easy way to gain attention to your body confidence issue or campaign – but it is essential to plan well to get the most out of it! This worksheet provides planning guidance for youth advocates and adult mentors to help ensure your survey gets you the data you need. The survey can be administered in person or online – digital tools like SurveyMonkey and Google Form can be linked to through social media or email.

Remember, try to keep your survey short – **it should take less than 5 minutes to complete**. Also, it is important to word your questions to get answers that are easy to analyze. Please see the end of this worksheet for examples.

Timeline	Your Response
What is your deadline for sharing survey data? (For example, to present at a lobby day or before a key committee votes.)	
When do you need all survey responses in order to meet the deadline?	
What is your midway check in date? (This is important for analyzing data to make course corrections if needed – for example, getting more responses from key districts and ensuring your survey sample matches your region in terms of gender, youth of color, and other demographics.)	
Targets	Your Response
What is your goal number of survey responses?	
Who are your key decision-makers, and what are their districts or regions?	
How can you recruit youth from those areas to complete the survey?	
How can you track youth in the survey to make sure you have representation from those areas? (For example, asking them their town or zip code – but not other identifiers so they can remain anonymous.)	

Survey Goals	Your Response
What do you want your target audience to think, feel, and do? What kinds of questions will help you move your audience to think, feel, and act on this issue?	
Which questions will you ask to show how youth are impacted by this issue? (For example, “Have you ever used a weight-loss supplement?” “Have you ever used a muscle-building supplement?” “How old were you when you first used...?”)	
Which questions can you include to lift up the voices of youth and what they think needs to be done to address this issue? (For example, “Do you believe companies should be prevented from selling weight-loss supplements and muscle-building supplements to anyone under the age of 18?”)	
How will you show the reality that young people face around body confidence issues – especially those aspects that adults might not be aware of? (For example, “Has an adult ever talked to you about the dangers of weight-loss supplements or muscle-building supplements?”)	

How to phrase survey questions for easy analysis. As you create the survey, keep in mind that you will have to sort through and present your data. You should simplify answers where possible – and think about the “headline” you want to come out of the data. This will help you create questions that will yield interesting data. For example, if you want to bring to light that kids are using weight-loss supplements at a young age, make sure to ask how old they were when they first used them – not just their current age.

Also, asking an open-ended question where participants fill in the blank can make the data hard to analyze for an advocacy campaign, so in most situations it is better to avoid this when at all possible. Some examples of questions to use – or avoid – are below.

Easy to Analyze	AVOID
How old were you when you first used weight-loss supplements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 or younger • 14-15 • 16-17 	How old are you? (Fill in the blank)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-20 • 21+ 	
<p>Have you ever seen someone being bullied or discriminated against because of their weight or size?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<p>What is your experience with weight discrimination?</p>
<p>Which town do you live in?</p> <p>[Provide drop-down menu of towns and cities to select from]</p>	<p>Which town do you live in?</p> <p>(Fill in the blank)</p>
<p>Where does pressure to use weight-loss supplements come from?</p> <p>(Check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends • Parents • Social Media – Friends • Social Media – Influencers • Advertisements • Coaches • Other: 	<p>Where does pressure to use weight-loss supplements come from?</p> <p>(Fill in the blank)</p>

Reality Check on Weight Loss and Muscle Building Supplements -- for Massachusetts Students

This survey is anonymous. We do not ask for your name or anything personally identifiable, so please share your honest answers to help us better understand your experience with weight loss supplements and muscle building supplements!

MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS ONLY.

PLEASE ONLY TAKE THIS SURVEY ONCE.

Thank you!!

* Required

1. Have you ever used over-the-counter diet pills, detox teas or other weight loss supplements? These can also be called fat burners, cleanses or keto pills and be sold in pharmacies like Walgreens, at stores like GNC, or online. *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Have you ever used muscle building supplements? These can also be called muscle builders, pre-workouts, creatine, or amino acids and sold in pharmacies like Walgreens, at stores like GNC or online. *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. How old were you when you first used these products? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 13
- ☐ 13-14
- ☐ 15-17
- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 20-22
- ☐ 23+
- ☐ I have not used these products

4. Have your friends used weight loss supplements or muscle building supplements?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. How easy is it for people under the age of 18 to purchase these products? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not easy at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very easy

6. Have you ever been encouraged to use weight loss supplements? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. If yes, who encouraged you to use weight loss supplements?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Teammate
- ☐ Coach
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Brother or sister
- ☐ Store clerk
- ☐ Other: _____

8. Have you ever been encouraged to use muscle building supplements for athletic performance? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. If yes, who encouraged you to use muscle building supplements?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Teammate
- ☐ Coach
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Brother or sister
- ☐ Store clerk
- ☐ Other: _____

10. In the past two years, has an adult talked to you about the dangers of tobacco, vaping, alcohol or drug use? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. In the past two years, has an adult talked to you about the dangers of diet pills or muscle building supplements? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. Do you believe companies should be prevented from selling over-the-counter weight loss supplements and muscle building supplements to anyone under the age of 18? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure yet

13. Have you ever observed people being discriminated against because of their body size? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. Do you believe laws should protect people from being discriminated against because of their body size? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. What is your current age? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Under 13

☐ 13-14

☐ 15-17

☐ 18-20

☐ 20-22

☐ 23+

16. 13. I identify my heritage as: (Check all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Black or African-American

☐ East Asian

☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ Middle Eastern or North African

☐ Pacific Islander

☐ South Asian

☐ White

17. My pronouns are: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ They/their
- ☐ She/her
- ☐ He/his
- ☐ Other: _____

18. What city or town do you live in? *

19. What is your zip code? *

20. If you are a college student, in which city or town do you attend college?

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Google Forms

Worksheet: Coalition Mapping

You may not need a large or complex coalition to run and win a campaign in support of body confidence legislation. But you will benefit from having more than one organization supporting the effort. Lawmakers will inevitably ask you, “Who else is supporting this bill?” You will want to have a good answer!

Regardless of how many organizations join your coalition, usually the bulk of is okay, if every organization knows its role and can deliver the support you n

Within the Power Prism®, there are four essential layers to successful campa

Example:

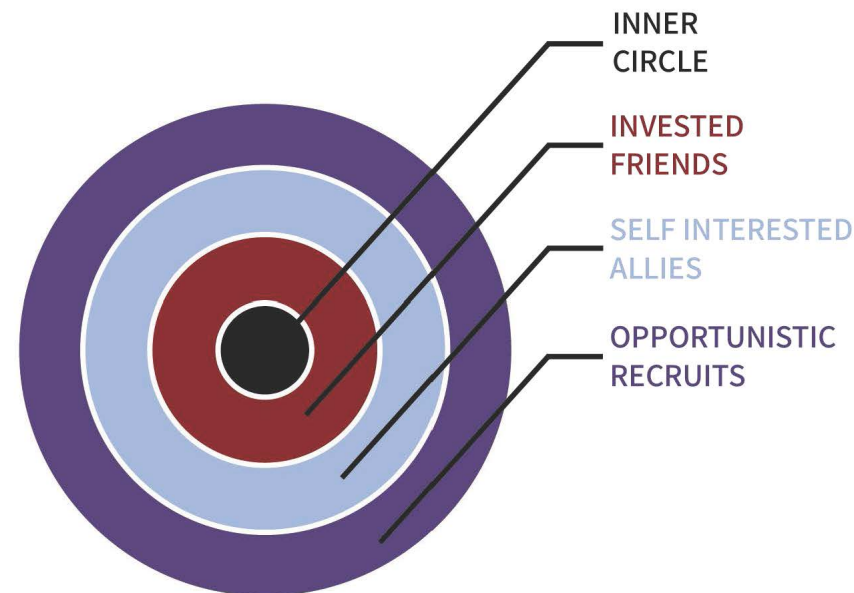
In a body confidence campaign, the coalition might strive for the following lay of membership:

Inner Circle: State eating disorder association, youth advocacy organization, academic research center, student body confidence club or civic group

Invested Friends: Professional associations of pediatricians, mental health professional, and school nurses, youth athletic association, researchers, community health centers, parent engagement organizations, youth, and heal ministries within faith-based groups

Self-Interested Allies: Health insurance companies

Opportunistic Recruits: Organizations that your key decision-maker belong has a positive connection to, or that are located in their district



Who can you recruit in each of the four coalition areas?


Categories of coalition partner	Criteria for consideration	Organizations you have or would like to recruit, <i>and why</i>
INNER CIRCLE	Which organizations directly share your campaign mission?	
INVESTED FRIENDS	Which organizations embrace a vision that would be advanced if your campaign succeeded?	
SELF-INTERESTED ALLIES	Which organizations stand to better serve their membership if your campaign succeeds?	
OPPORTUNISTIC RECRUITS	Which organizations have a good relationship with any of the key decision-makers you are seeking to influence? (Do some homework to identify groups that your key decision-makers trust and respect.)	

Questions to Help You Understand the Policy-Making Process in Your Area


Once you have decided you want to take action, you'll need to determine the best process for changing policy and whether your efforts should be focused on local, county, or state policy change or regulation. Most cities, towns, counties, and states have an official clerk's office and some staff that can respond to your inquiry. Here are some talking points and questions to ask when you contact their office.

- Hello. My name is *[your full name]* and I live on *[street address/town]*.
- If you are a student, or teacher, mention the name of your school.
- I am very concerned about _____ and would like to do something here in *[town, city, county, or state]* to *[goal of policy]*.
- I was hoping someone could explain the process for passing such a policy here in *[town, city, county, or state]* and if that is even possible.
- Do I need an elected official to sponsor this proposal or are citizens allowed to bring these issues forward for consideration by themselves? What is the most successful method?
- Are co-sponsors allowed? Are they limited in number? What is the process for adding a co-sponsor to the bill?
- Is there a specific committee that would typically review an issue like this? If so, might you recommend someone I could speak with on that committee?
- I have model policy language that has been used elsewhere. Might there be someone who could look at it to let me know how it would need to be customized to work here in *[town, city, county, or state]*?
- Is there a specific timeline for filing legislation? I would like to get any information I can about the official timeline, key dates, and process for consideration – including any committee review, public hearings, or votes.
- Last question – can you give me any examples of laws that have passed in the last few years that might be similar in their intention to protect public health? (You could learn a lot from talking to other advocates that have achieved policy change in your community, so you will want to follow up with them for some tips!)

Organizer's Checklist for Effective **In-Person** Coalition Meetings

	Activity	Notes, Person(s) Responsible & Follow-up
	<p>Set a regular schedule and location for meetings and circulate to coalition partners – Include meeting schedule in orientation packet for new members</p> <p><i>Choose a location that is accessible by public transportation, has free or affordable parking, and is accessible to persons with disabilities. Choose a meeting time that works for the youth, parents, and other community members you want to engage – not just for staff.</i></p>	
	Assign coalition partners to report on key parts of agenda for greater buy-in and listener interest	
	Circulate a meeting reminder 24-48 hours in advance	
	Establish goals of meeting in advance and share with membership when circulating meeting reminder	
	Develop a meeting agenda with times and roles and share with coalition chairs and subcommittee chairs 3 days before meeting for their changes and approval	
	Plan for onsite help for room set-up and post meeting clean-up – “staff” should arrive early!	
	Circulate a sign-in sheet to gather records of meeting participants -- or require an online registration beforehand.	
	Secure LCD projector AND laptop if needed	
	Secure ASL interpreter or translator services if needed	
	Get refreshments (preferably donated) - <i>avoid allergy inducing foods like nuts</i>	
	Set up the room with seating that easily accommodates different body sizes, for instance having some chairs without arms	
	Nametags	
	Pens (for sign-in sheet)	
	Markers (for name tags)	
	Flip chart or chalkboard for capturing action steps	
	Copy agenda and other materials and assemble participant packets	
	Designate a timekeeper	
	Task coalition chair or another participant with making sure that all members are given ample opportunity to be heard	
	Designate a competent notetaker to capture meeting minutes - key discussion points and action items	
	Circulate meeting minutes within 3 business days – highlighting assignments, key decisions, and next steps	
	Other?	

Organizer's Checklist for Effective **Virtual** Coalition Meetings

	Activity	Notes, Person(s) Responsible & Follow-up
	Set a regular meeting schedule and circulate online invitations to coalition partners. Require registration to capture attendees' contact information.	
	Circulate a meeting reminder 24-48 hours in advance	
	Establish goals of meeting in advance and share with membership when circulating meeting reminder	
	Develop a meeting agenda. Assign coalition members to report on key parts of the agenda for greater buy-in and listener interest.	
	Designate a facilitator to track meeting time	
	Task coalition chair or another participant with making sure that all members are given ample opportunity to be heard	
	Designate a competent notetaker to capture meeting minutes - key discussion points and action items	
	Remember to keep all attendees on mute, until they are scheduled to speak	
	Circulate meeting notes within 3 business days – highlighting assignments, key decisions, and next steps	
	Other?	

How to Conduct Pathways of Influence Research on Key Decision-Makers

What Are Pathways of Influence?

Decision-makers at every level are motivated by different things. The more we understand about their priorities, vulnerabilities, ambition, and the people and communities they serve, the better we will be able to tailor our messages and select effective messengers. We will be able to identify – and leverage – direct and indirect pathways that connect us and our campaign to the decision-maker.

Campaign strategy becomes even more strategic when informed by up-front research into possible “pathways of influence” for key decision-makers. Nowadays, the publicly available information about these targets is plentiful from online sources like Google, government websites, campaign finance reports, media coverage, candidate statements, and more. Add to that some good old-fashioned offline research (picking up the phone and chatting with friends and colleagues), and we can quickly learn a lot about a person – where they live, work, and play; the organizations they support and/or belong to; the profile of their constituency; what issues they care about; and, where they fit in the power structure. If we are lucky, we may uncover direct connections they have to our policy issue. Or, we may find the decision-maker has a connection to someone in our sphere of influence. In all cases, we are likely to uncover information that will help us customize our talking points and our approach to the decision-maker for maximum impact by understanding who they are, what their history and interests are, who they know and care about, and what is important to them.

Conducting Pathways of Influence Research

Pathways of Influence research can be as in-depth as is feasible depending upon the time and resources that are available for research. Even a little research can go a long way.

As you search through research sources, let hunches or interesting tidbits of information take you down different paths to pursue. In other words, do not be rigid but be flexible, creative, and inquisitive.

The key pieces of pathways research include:

- **Biographical information** – Where did they grow up? Where did they go to school? What jobs have they held? What are their volunteer commitments? What can you learn about their family? Who are the individuals and what are the causes that are important to them?

- **Social networks utilized** – Many state-level decision-makers have a presence on Facebook and Twitter, and these are useful sources for discovering where they have their closest connections (i.e., organizations, boards, local groups)
- **Electoral information for those in an elected position** – How long have they been in office? Were there difficult and close races? Who are the decision-maker's opponents? Who supports the decision-maker? What have been their campaign platforms? What have been the campaign vulnerabilities?
- **Donor information** – This is most accessible and most helpful for state-level lawmakers
- **Bills authored/sponsored** – This demonstrates the issues that are most important to the decision-maker. Are these issues your organization has worked on? What about your key partners? Are there any issues that are in some way connected to yours?
- **Board membership** – What boards does the decision-maker serve on? Who else is serving on these boards? In what types of organizations is the decision-maker involved?
- **Demographics and characteristics of district** – Is there an organization, business, or other institution within the district that may be supportive of your issue? Is your policy issue of importance to the residents and/or employers of the district the decision-maker represents?
- **Personal relationship/connection to your policy issue** – Is there some experience from the decision-maker's own life or that of a close family member or friend that gives them firsthand knowledge of and experience with your issue?
- **Political allies** – Who are the individuals who are influential with the decision-maker?
- **Political opponents** – Is the decision-maker up for re-election? If so, who are their opponents and where do they stand on your issue? Is your issue something that might be relevant as a campaign issue?

Sources of Information

The sites below are all good starting points for your online research and will provide a great deal of background information. As previously stated, the key is to follow the information where it leads, allowing yourself room to explore hunches and be inquisitive. However, be realistic about the time you have to conduct the research. This is not a master's level thesis! The research can continue forever -- so given the limited amount of time available, it will be important to focus on the largest and clearest connections between your specific policy goal and the decision-maker. Whenever possible, talking to others on

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the ground, including friends and colleagues, is a great source of information, especially information not available on websites and other key relationships.

Helpful online sources:

- State legislative websites;
- Campaign websites;
- Election commission websites for donor information;
- Local newspaper searches for decision-maker's name;
- Wikipedia (both for the decision-maker and the district/major cities or towns); and
- Websites for any organization in which the decision-maker is involved.

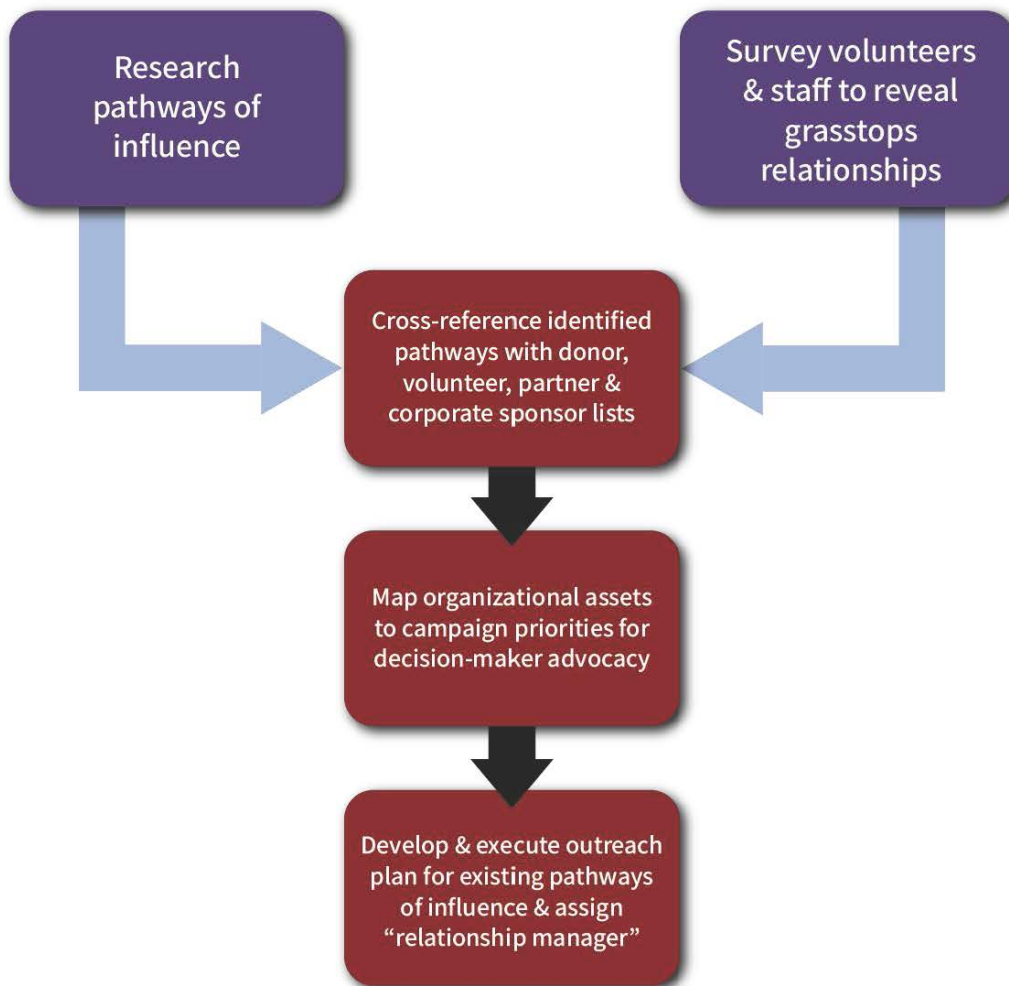
Turning Information Into Power

Once the pathways research is conducted, you should engage in some *asset mapping* to uncover existing resources that can be leveraged to influence the decision-makers. This process involves overlaying the findings from the pathways research with your organization (your staff, board members, donors, and volunteers) as well as your campaign (partner organizations, key supporters, endorsers, etc.) to see where there is overlap. Once you have identified these connection points, work to craft an action plan for leveraging those pathways of influence.

Example:

You have conducted Pathways of Influence research on Senator Susan Smith. When you do your asset mapping after the Pathways research process, you discover that one of your organization's board members is a major donor to the Senator and has been for some time. You also learn that one of your senior managers sits on the board of the local YMCA where the Senator also serves as a board member. Finally, you learn that Senator Smith has been a lead champion on a piece of legislation that was a top priority of one of your partner organizations. These become promising pathways of influence, and you craft a plan for charging your board member, the senior manager, and the partner organization with engaging Senator Smith around the campaign. These individuals become your main point of contact for the Senator and work to build a relationship and cultivate the Senator's interest in and support for the campaign. Without the Pathways of Influence research, you would never have known that the Senator had these indirect – and powerful – connections to your campaign.

Decision-Maker Advocacy Process Flow





Engaging Youth in Leadership Roles When Advocating for Body Confidence

Young people are a primary target of a diet industry that tries to sell products by making them believe they are not good enough. This industry – and the beauty industry in general – makes money by undermining body confidence... and it works. Eleven percent of teens report ever using dietary supplements for weight loss.

¹ Nearly 35% of high school boys report using muscle-building protein powders or shakes.

² About 17% of high school senior boys have used creatine, an underregulated supplement, in hopes of building muscle.³

Advocacy is the application of pressure and influence on the people and institutions that have the power to give you what you want. Our number one job is to make it EASY for decision-makers to give us what we want! (And hard for them to ignore us!) The power of grassroots advocacy cannot be overstated. Who better to amplify the message than local youth?

When a key decision-maker hears directly from their constituents on an issue, it matters. While lawmakers like to hear from adult constituents, it is the voices of young people that resonate and can be especially impactful.

Youth advocates can be trained and mobilized to speak with their peers, the media, and decision-makers about the issue. Our body confidence campaigns must have youth in leadership positions because they are the ones most harmed by the industry practices we are seeking to change. Adult leaders and career advocates must make room at the campaign decision-making table for local youth. That means:

- ✓ Changing coalition culture to be more youth-friendly, such as holding meetings at times and in locations convenient to youth;
- ✓ Compensating active youth leaders for their time working on the campaign;
- ✓ Training youth to develop the skills needed for effective advocacy;
- ✓ Empowering youth by asking them to lead the development of a survey to gauge their peers' experiences with dietary supplements, digitally altered ads, or weight discrimination and create a strategy to recruit youth to fill out the survey; and,
- ✓ Including youth at every step of the process, such as: collecting the data that define the problem, speaking with the media, testifying at public hearings, recruiting other youth from key legislative districts, enlisting organizations to sign on to the organizational statement of support, etc.

With some preparation, youth advocates will be well equipped to share their personal stories from lived experience to lawmakers, media outlets, and social media posts. Using the tools below, you can work with youth to hone their pitch and ensure they are heard.

Tools:

- [Telling Your Personal Story](#) – build confidence in sharing your story
- [Developing 27-9-3 Pitch](#) – craft a catchy persuasive statement
- [Answering the Three Key Questions](#) – identify your target
- [Pathways of Influence](#) research – know your target audience

Remember, you want to raise the voices of youth in your community. An effective way to do this is by having your youth advocates develop a survey and administer that survey to their peers in person, through social media, via text, or in another way. This is a powerful way for youth leaders to take the pulse of their generation. More importantly, it puts youth leaders in the driver's seat as the truth-tellers, exposing the many ways the diet industry and beauty industry have infiltrated their lives and begun to destroy body confidence. Collaborate with your teen leaders to create a survey that is user-friendly but can also dig into the truth surrounding weight-loss supplement and muscle-building supplement usage and where this pressure comes from. Once the data are collected and analyzed, schedule a meeting or presentation with your target lawmakers. Allow the youth the opportunity to share the information in their words.

Included is a sample [survey](#) recently utilized by youth in Massachusetts to reach their peers across the state. For more guidance on developing a youth survey, see our [Developing a Youth Survey](#) worksheet.

¹ Wilson KM, Klein, JD, Sesselberg TS, et al. Use of Complementary Medicine and Dietary Supplements among U.S. Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2006;38(4):385-394. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.01.010.

² Eisenberg ME, Wall M, Neumark-Sztainer D. Muscle-enhancing Behaviors Among Adolescent Girls and Boys. *Pediatrics*. December 2012, 130 (6) 1019-1026. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/6/1019>

³ Miech, R. A., Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., Schulenberg, J. E., & Patrick, M. E. (2017). Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975–2016: Volume I, Secondary school students. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. <http://monitoringthefuture.org/pubs.html#monographs>.

Tips for Testifying at Public Hearings

State and local legislative hearings and town meetings are an opportunity to speak directly to decision-makers about body confidence issues and the ways youth are impacted in your community.

It is helpful to do some advance research to find out who is on the committee and what district they represent. Ideally, some of the advocates who testify on behalf of your legislation to promote body confidence and reduce eating disorders will live in a committee member's district.

- Prior to the hearing/meeting, be sure to check the schedule/calendar for any last-minute changes and postponements.
- At the hearing/meeting, check in – you may be asked to sign in as a speaker.
- Public forums may start with an explanation of the rules, order of speakers, etc.
- In many cases, the moderator/committee chair calls speakers from a list. In other cases, you may need to volunteer to speak by walking up to the microphone.
- When you stand up to speak, give yourself a moment to collect your thoughts at the microphone – do not feel rushed – this is your time. Breathe. When you are ready, introduce yourself.
- To introduce yourself, include your full name, where you live, and your specific personal or professional connection to the issue the legislation will address, such as body confidence or eating disorders – *explain why you care*.
- Make sure to reference the correct bill number and lead sponsor.
- If you are nervous – say so! It humanizes you and breaks the ice!
- Do not get caught up in presenting every fact under the sun in your oral testimony. You will be much more persuasive and memorable if your words paint a picture of the “problem” you seek to fix – through YOUR eyes and YOUR experience. Statistics have nothing on personal stories!

- Keep it short! Make your point quickly and clearly. A good guideline is 3 minutes per person.
- You can usually submit written testimony to support your spoken statement. Use your written testimony for ALL of the details and data you wish to present. Do NOT read it to the committee!
- Keep it personal! Show how the issue affects you, your family, and friends. This is easier for people to understand than facts and figures.
- Keep it local! Give specific examples when you can.
- Make eye contact and do not be afraid to use some appropriate humor if that makes you feel more comfortable.
- Remind decision-makers why you care about this issue and that you are counting on them to help.
- Offer yourself up as a local resource if they have any questions about the points you covered in the future.
- Since you are testifying about an issue that matters to you, consider taking pictures to capture the moment for a local press release or your organization's website, social media, fundraising appeal, or newsletter.

Testifying at a Virtual Hearing

State and local legislative hearings and town meetings may switch to an online, virtual platform. Your testimony is still crucial and can still provide an opportunity to speak directly to decision-makers. In addition to following the guidelines mentioned above, below are some helpful tips for testifying on a virtual platform:

- Avoid any busy backdrops or backgrounds that can be distracting.
- Do not have any family members, co-workers, or pets on screen with you.
- Test your lighting and audio prior to testifying. It is best to be on Wi-Fi, if possible, for good sound and video quality.
- Have your notes close to the camera so you can keep your face and eyes up as much as possible.
- Look directly into your computer camera. Keep your audio on mute until you are ready to speak.
- For best sound quality, sit within two feet of your computer.

Template Script for Testimony

- Hello my name is _____.
- I live in _____.

Make eye contact with committee members and smile – they won't bite!

- I am here today on behalf of (ORGANIZATION FOR WHICH YOU WORK OR VOLUNTEER).
- (ORGANIZATION) is committed to (explain mission of organization).
- I am here to speak in support of (bill number).

Breathe and smile and take your time!

- This legislation is important to me because (explain **IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE PROBLEM THAT THE BILL SEEKS TO FIX AND WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION.**)
 - Do not use too many statistics here. You can submit a letter to the committee with all of the data and facts you want them to know, but your oral testimony should be PERSONAL. When it comes to this legislation and body confidence, what is your experience? What have you witnessed?
 - Tell them why YOU care and why you want their help.
 - Your goal should be to help lawmakers understand the issue as though they were standing in YOUR shoes in YOUR community.
 - Paint a picture of the problem in your community: What you see. What you hear. What you know to be true.
 - Breathe. Make eye contact with committee members.
- It is for these reasons that I am here today to urge you to support (bill number).
- Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Smile and gather your materials from the table – do not rush!

Tips for Community Engagement in Body Confidence Advocacy


The primary role of advocates is to make it easy for decision-makers to give us what we want. Engage your advocate community in a conversation that is designed specifically to share personal stories and perspectives about the issues. Conversations shaped by lived experiences elicit deeper relationships that can apply pressure and influence on lawmakers and other decision-makers.

This document provides an overview and a checklist for meaningful conversations that allow individuals to be influential advocates.


Tips:

- Leave the data-filled PowerPoint presentation at the office. There is nothing worse than defining a community through the data YOU brought to them. Let the community define itself.
- Include volunteers, co-workers, board members, and partner organizations in the conversation.
- Be prepared ahead of time with well-thought-out questions that focus on solutions and encourage thinking. Open-ended questions elicit personal, real-life experiences and provide an opportunity for advocates to look and listen to individuals who share their mutual passion.
- Be a good listener and engage in dialogue. The ideal meeting is a dialogue, not a monologue. Be flexible and allow the conversation to be a give and take.
- Build a relationship: When it comes to advocacy, it is all about relationships. Investing time in getting to know your volunteers, as well as decision-makers, is time well spent. Communicate frequently, check-in, ask questions, offer yourself as a resource, share new information, and work to get to know these individuals and to have them know you. Remember that your goal is to build an ongoing relationship.
- If your community conversations are held in a district served by key lawmakers, consider inviting the lawmaker to join you - BUT make sure to engage them as equal participants in conversation with other community members – not as guest speakers.

Organizer's Checklist for Effective **In-Person** Community Meetings

	Activity
	Designate lead organizer for meeting
	Secure date, time, and location that prioritize the convenience of those most impacted by the legislation you are proposing
	Create invitation – with RSVP and directions
	Develop a broad invitation list with contact information
	Invite local organizations to co-sponsor and co-brand the event
	Develop a meeting agenda with times and roles
	Develop a script and assign speaking roles and practice with a “dry run”
	Assign “mingler” to welcome all attendees as they arrive to put them at ease
	If dignitaries will be in attendance, assign someone to serve as informal “handler” to make sure they feel special
	Collect RSVPs – Get phone, email, and any accommodations (sign language, dietary needs, translator, childcare, etc.)
	Create participant contact list – including email/phone numbers in case of last-minute changes
	Send a reminder two days before the meeting (via email, text, and social media)
	Secure LCD projector AND laptop if needed
	Secure ASL interpreter, translator services, and childcare if needed
	Test and practice presentations in advance
	Get refreshments (preferably donated) – <i>avoid allergy inducing foods like nuts</i>
	Set up the room with seating that easily accommodates different body sizes, for instance having some chairs without arms
	Bring name tags, markers, pens, masking tape, and flip chart
	Create signs to direct people to the meeting
	Bring a sign-in sheet to capture name, email, phone, and home address of attendees
	Include sign-on letters of support
	Assign a volunteer to photograph the event – be sure to have photo release forms to get participant permission to use their image
	Invite local reporters, if appropriate
	Designate a competent notetaker to capture meeting minutes, key discussion points, and action items
	Copy materials and bring participant packets
	Secure onsite help for the day of -- room set-up, registration, seating, and clean-up
	Recognize all dignitaries by name and title at the beginning of the event
	Send thank-you notes and meeting minutes within 3 business days - highlighting assignments, key decisions, and next steps

Organizer's Checklist for Effective **Virtual** Community Meetings

	Activity
	Identify day/time that is convenient for those most impacted by the legislation you are proposing
	Send virtual invitation and require registration to capture attendees' contact information
	Invite local organizations to co-sponsor and co-brand the event
	Develop a meeting agenda with times and roles
	Develop a script and assign speaking roles and practice with a "dry run"
	Circulate a meeting reminder 24-48 hours in advance
	Recognize all dignitaries by name and title at the beginning of the event
	Designate a facilitator to track meeting time
	Designate a competent notetaker to capture meeting minutes, key discussion points, and action items
	Recognize all dignitaries by name and title at the beginning of the event
	Remember to keep all attendees on mute, until they are scheduled to speak
	Send thank-you note and include meeting notes within 3 business days
	Other?

Date: _____

Page ____

Meeting Location: _____

Sign-in Sheet for In-Person Community Meeting on Body Confidence Advocacy
**If conducting a virtual meeting, please require contact information upon registration.*

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!

Full Name:	
Home/Voting Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Organization/Title:	
If under age 18, please include birth date:	
Full Name:	
Home/Voting Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Organization/Title:	
If under age 18, please include birth date:	
Full Name:	
Home/Voting Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Organization/Title:	
If under age 18, please include birth date:	
Full Name:	
Home/Voting Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Organization/Title:	
If under age 18, please include birth date:	
Full Name:	
Home/Voting Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Organization/Title:	
If under age 18, please include birth date:	

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Remember, you want to raise the voices of youth in your community. An effective way to do this is by having your youth advocates develop a survey and administer that survey to their peers in person, through social media, via text, or in another way. This is a powerful way for youth leaders to take the pulse of their generation. More importantly, it puts youth leaders in the driver's seat as the truth-tellers, exposing the many ways the diet industry and beauty industry have infiltrated their lives and begun to destroy body confidence. Collaborate with your teen leaders to create a survey that is user-friendly but can also dig into the truth surrounding weight-loss supplement and muscle-building supplement usage and where this pressure comes from. Once the data are collected and analyzed, schedule a meeting or presentation with your target lawmakers. Allow the youth the opportunity to share the information in their words.

Included is a sample [survey](#) recently utilized by youth in Massachusetts to reach their peers across the state. For more guidance on developing a youth survey, see our [Developing a Youth Survey](#) worksheet.

¹ Wilson KM, Klein, JD, Sesselberg TS, et al. Use of Complementary Medicine and Dietary Supplements among U.S. Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2006;38(4):385-394. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.01.010.

² Eisenberg ME, Wall M, Neumark-Sztainer D. Muscle-enhancing Behaviors Among Adolescent Girls and Boys. *Pediatrics*. December 2012, 130 (6) 1019-1026. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/6/1019>

³ Miech, R. A., Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., Schulenberg, J. E., & Patrick, M. E. (2017). Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975–2016: Volume I, Secondary school students. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. <http://monitoringthefuture.org/pubs.html#monographs>.



Worksheet: Telling Your Personal Story About Body Confidence

One of the most effective ways to advocate for a policy or systems change is to share real stories that illustrate the problem we are looking to solve. Real people who have a personal connection to body confidence are critically important to convince decision-makers, the media, and the general public that change is needed. This includes people who have lived experience with an eating disorder, weight discrimination, and muscle-building or weight-loss supplement usage; their friends and family, health care providers, researchers, parents, young people who have been targeted by the diet industry and more. Lawmakers and the media do not want you to recite the facts to them, they want to connect with the issue on a human level. They want to feel something.

This short worksheet can help you write a brief account of your personal story. We know how hard it can be to take a real-life experience and attempt to boil it down to a few short paragraphs! We hope this makes the process a bit easier for you.

We are honored that you are sharing your personal story with us and will treat it with care.

(1) What do you want those who hear your story to think about or understand about body confidence?

(2) How do you want listeners to feel when they hear your story about body confidence?

(3) How might your story convince a decision-maker that our advocacy goal is important?

(4) Tell us your story, trying to incorporate your answers to questions 1-3. Please limit your story to 3 paragraphs. We recommend not sharing specific details around weight numbers and calorie intake. Please reference this [resource from the Canadian National Initiative for Eating Disorders](#) for more specific recommendations regarding sharing personal experience with body image.

Campaign Jobs for Grassroots Volunteers in Your Body Confidence Campaign

Do you have some highly engaged grassroots advocates? Do you need extra people power to help execute the many campaign strategies? Body confidence campaigns appeal to adults and young people. You will find plenty of volunteers will be invaluable if you give them a clear role. Below you will find several volunteer opportunities that correspond with the Power Prism® advocacy framework and can help move your legislation forward.

Research and Policy Analysis Coordinator

- Conduct Pathways of Influence research. Collect detailed information on the target decision-makers (such as the small number of state senators and representatives that will determine the fate of your bill).
- Localize state or national fact sheets on the issue your campaign seeks to address (for example, data on eating disorders in your state or use of weight-loss supplements by youth in your state, if available).
- Through the online system and via the telephone, survey all grassroots volunteers, donors, and staff using a personal relationship profile to identify their connections to target decision-makers. Document those personal relationships so you can go back to them later when you need direct contact with those lawmakers.

Coalition Building and Maintenance Coordinator

- Draft a sign-on letter supporting the body confidence policy and circulate to organizations in the community to recruit co-signers and coalition members. Make sure that your message points are inclusive of the kinds of organizations you hope to enlist. Make your sign-on document relevant to organizations that represent health, mental health, athletics, etc., among parents, students, communities of color, sexual and gender minorities, youth civic engagement leaders, educators, low-income families, or other groups that have a stake in your campaign issue.
- Represent the body confidence campaign as part of a local or state coalition, attend regular meetings, and report back to campaign staff on coalition activities and opportunities to advance policy agenda.
- Make presentations to other organizations (body confidence clubs, school athletic associations, eating disorder support groups, public health association, etc.) in an effort to enlist them to join the specific policy or systems change campaign.

Grassroots and Grasstops Coordinator

- Organize a small social gathering (virtual or in person) to talk about the campaign. Use the event to engage young people, issue experts, and others. If funds are needed to support components of the campaign, consider including a financial “ask” as part of these small social events.
- Use STRIPED infographics and your network’s social media platforms to recruit people to join and support the campaign.
- Meet personally with decision-makers for a “getting to know you” meeting to share your stories about why body confidence and this legislation matter to you.
- At community events, lead an onsite community mobilization activity such as phone banking, voter enrollment, capturing personal stories on video or in print, postcard writing, petition-gathering, and grassroots advocate sign-ups.

Fundraising and Development Coordinator

- Once the campaign is laid out, work with the campaign coordinator to develop a realistic budget to cover all associated costs.
- Create a specialized fundraising event to raise funds and interest to support the campaign. It may be very narrow in scope such as a house party to raise money to cover printing costs for a petition drive or pay for buses to take grassroots advocates to a state body confidence lobby day depending upon the skills and availability of the volunteer and support staff.

Media Advocacy Coordinator

- Attend a media advocacy training to learn about the nuts and bolts of working with the media, staying on message, and becoming an issue spokesperson.
- Meet with local reporters who cover the beat most related to your policy area (health, youth and schools, business, public interest, etc.). Start with a “getting to know you” meeting before asking them to cover your story.
- Write and submit letters-to-the-editor on your body confidence policy topic. Ask other grassroots advocates to do the same.
- Attend an editorial board meeting arranged by campaign staff or consultants on key policy issues – perhaps as a content expert.

- Hold a press conference or media event in a key legislative district about the ways in which the diet industry markets to kids through its product advertising, retail placement, and celebrity influencers.
- Serve as prepared media spokespeople who can be activated with little notice to respond to media inquiries.
- Monitor media stories in key areas to ensure an appropriate and timely response any time body confidence, eating disorders, child mental health, weight discrimination, corporate marketing practices, product regulation – or lack thereof – or other relevant issues are noted in news stories. Any of those issues could be good hooks to talk about your campaign.
- Serve as social media influencer for the campaign, generating content and momentum around body confidence and exposing the diet industry’s manipulation of young people.

Decision-Maker Advocacy and Lobbying Coordinator

- Meet in person with target decision-makers and try to include other grassroots activists in the meetings. Remember to take notes and complete a meeting feedback form to return to staff at completion of the meeting.
- Assist campaign staff in inviting decision-makers to attend community events. Serve as a special “host” or “handler” at the event to ensure the decision-maker gets personal attention and recognition.
- Organize a tour of your state house to coincide with a Body Confidence Advocacy Day.
- In election season, ask all candidates for office what their position on your legislation is at public candidate forums.



Worksheet: Who Do You Know? Personal Relationship Profile

Your Name:

Voting Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Social Media Used: ☐ Facebook ☐ Instagram ☐ Twitter ☐ Other

Our body confidence campaign will benefit from being connected to key players through people they already know and trust, like you! If you have friends, family, and other personal contacts in the categories listed below AND you are willing to reach out to them at some point on behalf of this body confidence campaign, please let us know! Please use the reverse side if you need more space.

Do you personally know any elected officials?

Name of lawmaker:

Office held:

City/town:

Your relationship to lawmaker:

Do you personally know anyone who works in the media (newspaper, TV, other news source) in this state?

Name of media contact:

Media outlet where contact is employed:

City/town:

Your relationship to media contact:

Do you personally know any leaders from the business community (CEO, COO) or faith community?

Name of community leader:

Organization/business with which they are affiliated:

City/town:

Your relationship to community leader:

Worksheet: Developing Your Persuasive Message – The 27-9-3 Rule

*Created by some Vermont lawmakers years ago, the 27-9-3 rule requires you to make your persuasive point in no more than **27 words** within a time frame no longer than **nine seconds** with no more than **three points** discussed. These limitations help us focus on understanding how to connect to our listener. This message is not the place to present your entire appeal – just enough to hook the listener in wanting to hear more. [Click here to see some 27-9-3 messages](#) created by Massachusetts advocates in 2020 concerning a bill on weight-loss supplements and muscle-building supplements. Then try it for yourself!*

Your name: _____

Before crafting your message, consider and answer the 5 questions below.

1. Who is the **audience** for this particular message about your body confidence legislation? (i.e., a specific lawmaker, volunteer, prospective advocate or coalition partner, donor, reporter, etc.)
2. What might appeal to their **direct self-interest**? (What's in it for them? Why should they care?)
3. What do you want your audience to **think** or **understand** about your issue?
4. How do you want them to **feel** about what you have said?
5. What do you want your listener to **do** after they hear your message?

Write out your 27-9-3 message.. Practice saying it out loud to someone and invite their feedback. Your statement may *sound* very different than it reads and most of our messages will be spoken, so we want to make sure that our message rolls off our tongue easily; is not full of jargon; and that it actually sounds like something you would say out loud to another human being in person or leave on a voicemail! Revise your statement based on the feedback you receive.

Worksheet: Ideal Budget Template for Statewide Legislative Campaign

Name of campaign:			
	Cost	Explanation of Cost (% of time/estimated hours, etc.)	In-Kind Provider
PERSONNEL			
Campaign Coordinator			
Other Project and Administrative Staff Salaries			
Fringe Benefits			
Personnel Subtotal			
OTHER DIRECT COSTS			
Office Operations			
Telephone & Cell Phone			
Postage, Supplies & Printing			
Advertising, Communications & Marketing			
Software or Subscription for digital platform			
Polls and Surveys			
Equipment			
Travel			
Air Travel			
Lodging			
Meals			
Bus/Train Fare			
Mileage & Parking			
Meetings			
Facilities & AV Equipment			
Meals			
Materials			
Event Promotion (posters, social media, etc.)			
Facilities/Space			
Other Direct Costs Subtotal			
PURCHASED SERVICES			
Contract Lobbyist(s)			

Other Consultants			
Stipends for highly active community members			
Stipends for highly active youth			
Purchased Services Subtotal			
Indirect Cost Reimbursement (12% of personnel and other direct and 4% of purchased services)			
Total Campaign Ideal Budget			

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Worksheet: Who Do You Know? Personal Relationship Profile

Your Name:

Voting Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Social Media Used: ☐ Facebook ☐ Instagram ☐ Twitter ☐ Other

Our body confidence campaign will benefit from being connected to key players through people they already know and trust, like you! If you have friends, family, and other personal contacts in the categories listed below AND you are willing to reach out to them at some point on behalf of this body confidence campaign, please let us know! Please use the reverse side if you need more space.

Do you personally know any elected officials?

Name of lawmaker:

Office held:

City/town:

Your relationship to lawmaker:

Do you personally know anyone who works in the media (newspaper, TV, other news source) in this state?

Name of media contact:

Media outlet where contact is employed:

City/town:

Your relationship to media contact:

Do you personally know any leaders from the business community (CEO, COO) or faith community?

Name of community leader:

Organization/business with which they are affiliated:

City/town:

Your relationship to community leader:

How to Conduct Pathways of Influence Research on Key Decision-Makers

What Are Pathways of Influence?

Decision-makers at every level are motivated by different things. The more we understand about their priorities, vulnerabilities, ambition, and the people and communities they serve, the better we will be able to tailor our messages and select effective messengers. We will be able to identify – and leverage – direct and indirect pathways that connect us and our campaign to the decision-maker.

Campaign strategy becomes even more strategic when informed by up-front research into possible “pathways of influence” for key decision-makers. Nowadays, the publicly available information about these targets is plentiful from online sources like Google, government websites, campaign finance reports, media coverage, candidate statements, and more. Add to that some good old-fashioned offline research (picking up the phone and chatting with friends and colleagues), and we can quickly learn a lot about a person – where they live, work, and play; the organizations they support and/or belong to; the profile of their constituency; what issues they care about; and, where they fit in the power structure. If we are lucky, we may uncover direct connections they have to our policy issue. Or, we may find the decision-maker has a connection to someone in our sphere of influence. In all cases, we are likely to uncover information that will help us customize our talking points and our approach to the decision-maker for maximum impact by understanding who they are, what their history and interests are, who they know and care about, and what is important to them.

Conducting Pathways of Influence Research

Pathways of Influence research can be as in-depth as is feasible depending upon the time and resources that are available for research. Even a little research can go a long way.

As you search through research sources, let hunches or interesting tidbits of information take you down different paths to pursue. In other words, do not be rigid but be flexible, creative, and inquisitive.

The key pieces of pathways research include:

- **Biographical information** – Where did they grow up? Where did they go to school? What jobs have they held? What are their volunteer commitments? What can you learn about their family? Who are the individuals and what are the causes that are important to them?

- **Social networks utilized** – Many state-level decision-makers have a presence on Facebook and Twitter, and these are useful sources for discovering where they have their closest connections (i.e., organizations, boards, local groups)
- **Electoral information for those in an elected position** – How long have they been in office? Were there difficult and close races? Who are the decision-maker's opponents? Who supports the decision-maker? What have been their campaign platforms? What have been the campaign vulnerabilities?
- **Donor information** – This is most accessible and most helpful for state-level lawmakers
- **Bills authored/sponsored** – This demonstrates the issues that are most important to the decision-maker. Are these issues your organization has worked on? What about your key partners? Are there any issues that are in some way connected to yours?
- **Board membership** – What boards does the decision-maker serve on? Who else is serving on these boards? In what types of organizations is the decision-maker involved?
- **Demographics and characteristics of district** – Is there an organization, business, or other institution within the district that may be supportive of your issue? Is your policy issue of importance to the residents and/or employers of the district the decision-maker represents?
- **Personal relationship/connection to your policy issue** – Is there some experience from the decision-maker's own life or that of a close family member or friend that gives them firsthand knowledge of and experience with your issue?
- **Political allies** – Who are the individuals who are influential with the decision-maker?
- **Political opponents** – Is the decision-maker up for re-election? If so, who are their opponents and where do they stand on your issue? Is your issue something that might be relevant as a campaign issue?

Sources of Information

The sites below are all good starting points for your online research and will provide a great deal of background information. As previously stated, the key is to follow the information where it leads, allowing yourself room to explore hunches and be inquisitive. However, be realistic about the time you have to conduct the research. This is not a master's level thesis! The research can continue forever -- so given the limited amount of time available, it will be important to focus on the largest and clearest connections between your specific policy goal and the decision-maker. Whenever possible, talking to others on

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the ground, including friends and colleagues, is a great source of information, especially information not available on websites and other key relationships.

Helpful online sources:

- State legislative websites;
- Campaign websites;
- Election commission websites for donor information;
- Local newspaper searches for decision-maker's name;
- Wikipedia (both for the decision-maker and the district/major cities or towns); and
- Websites for any organization in which the decision-maker is involved.

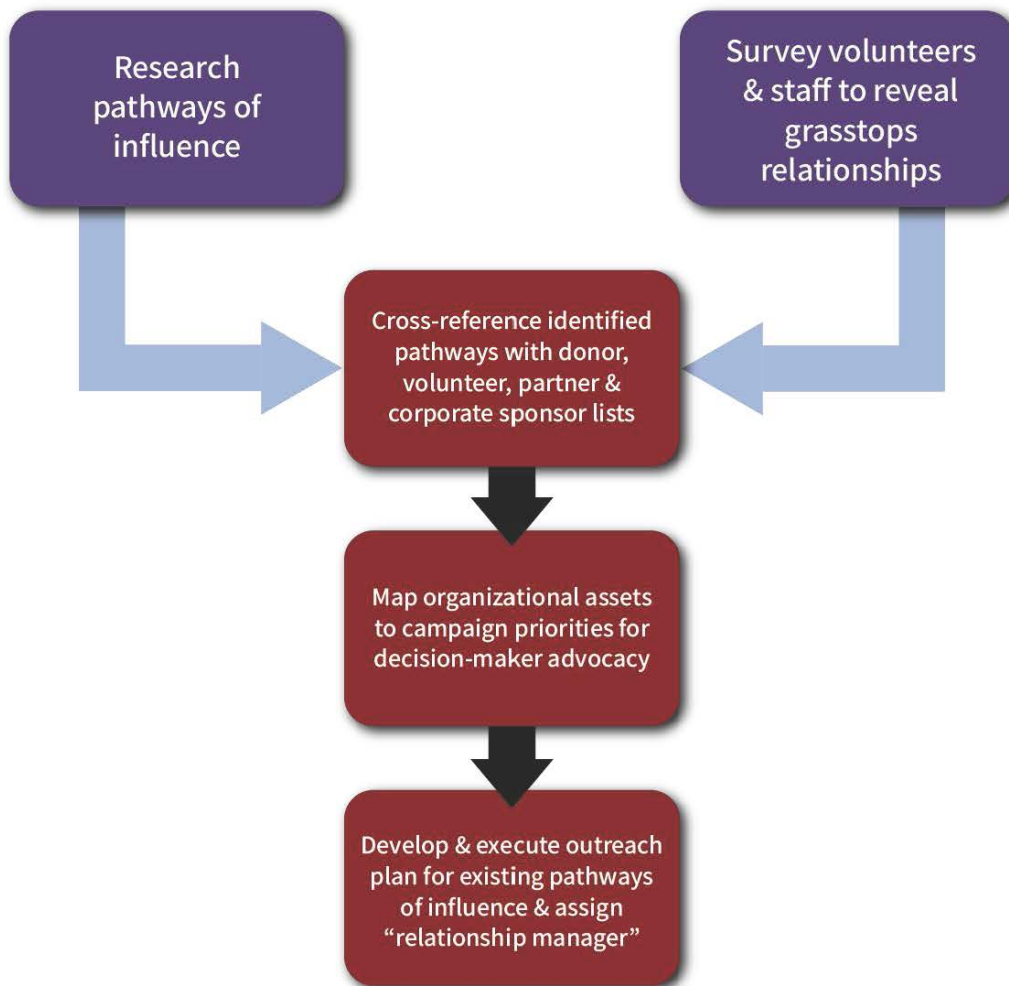
Turning Information Into Power

Once the pathways research is conducted, you should engage in some *asset mapping* to uncover existing resources that can be leveraged to influence the decision-makers. This process involves overlaying the findings from the pathways research with your organization (your staff, board members, donors, and volunteers) as well as your campaign (partner organizations, key supporters, endorsers, etc.) to see where there is overlap. Once you have identified these connection points, work to craft an action plan for leveraging those pathways of influence.

Example:

You have conducted Pathways of Influence research on Senator Susan Smith. When you do your asset mapping after the Pathways research process, you discover that one of your organization's board members is a major donor to the Senator and has been for some time. You also learn that one of your senior managers sits on the board of the local YMCA where the Senator also serves as a board member. Finally, you learn that Senator Smith has been a lead champion on a piece of legislation that was a top priority of one of your partner organizations. These become promising pathways of influence, and you craft a plan for charging your board member, the senior manager, and the partner organization with engaging Senator Smith around the campaign. These individuals become your main point of contact for the Senator and work to build a relationship and cultivate the Senator's interest in and support for the campaign. Without the Pathways of Influence research, you would never have known that the Senator had these indirect – and powerful – connections to your campaign.

Decision-Maker Advocacy Process Flow



Storytelling and the Power of Making Headlines

BY LESLIE KERNS, M+R STRATEGIC SERVICES

What does Raquel Nelson, a single mom from Atlanta trying to make ends meet for her three kids, have to do with transportation policy?

Until 2011, probably nothing. Then one regrettable evening, everything changed.

Raquel was on her way home from Walmart with her kids, groceries, and a cake to celebrate her two-year-old's birthday. When the family exited the bus across the street from their apartment complex after a hectic journey, Raquel had a choice: walk half-a-mile down the road to the nearest crosswalk or jaywalk the four-lane intersection.

There were no sidewalks and very few lights on the street. Plus, a mile is an awful long detour when you are handling three children and grocery bags. So like many apartment complex residents before her, Raquel decided to take the direct route and cross the street.

While the family waited in the median for traffic to pass, the four-year-old darted into the street. Raquel raced to catch him and as she did a driver plowed into them and sped away. The collision killed her son. And as she was recovering in the hospital, the mourning mother was charged and then convicted by a jury of vehicular homicide.

This story is heartbreaking. It is also powerful. But only if people know about it.

Unfortunately, throughout the trial, the public did not hear Raquel's full story. We were lucky enough to catch a newswire brief about the jury's decision during our daily scan of news clips for our work with the Transportation for America campaign. Even without the details, the story stood out to us because it made the findings in a new report we were promoting about pedestrian safety called 'Dangerous by Design' painfully real.

More than 47,000 pedestrians died on American roadways between 2000 and 2009. Without her story, Raquel's son was another sad statistic. With her story, his death was a wake-up call.

We immediately got to work with [Transportation for America](#) to fill in more pieces of the story and get in touch with Raquel and her new lawyer who were appealing to the judge for a retrial. Raquel agreed to work with us to spread the word about her story and raise awareness about the need for safer transportation systems in America.

Within the week, Raquel and her story were featured on NBC's Today Show, ABC, CNN as well as in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* and *Forbes*. We also promoted a petition on Change.org that attracted hundreds of thousands of signatures in support of Raquel. The petitions were delivered to the judge who ultimately granted Raquel a new trial.



Because of the media pressure and public outcry due to her story, Raquel was given a second chance and cities began to have a conversation about how to prevent this tragedy from repeating.

Why does storytelling matter?

The power of Raquel's story is proof of why organizations and campaigns need to embrace storytelling via the media to advance or protect the causes you care about. By finally telling this mother's story in the news, we were able to elicit a huge public response and make a real impact on her life and a nation's views on traffic design.

That's because there's magic in stories. Or as Professor Brian Boyd (*On the Origin of Stories*) and our friend Jonah Sachs (*Winning The Story Wars* and Free Range Studios) point out, our genes are wired for stories and human survival relies on them. From our perspective as campaigners, the explanation from literary scholar Jonathan Gottschall (*The Storytelling Animal*) makes a lot of sense to us. He says it takes stories to awaken the neurotransmitters that cause our brains to change.

Whether it's magic or science, everyone agrees that storytelling matters. That's because stories:

- **Are universal.** You may not be a mother of three who travels often on Atlanta buses. But perhaps you're a parent, you live on a similar street, or you're a regular public transportation user or walker. In other words, you can relate to Raquel because her story (and all stories) helps us bridge cultural, linguistic, generational divides.
- **Help us process information.** Our brains think in narrative structures, so stories help us remember facts and statistics we would otherwise forget or not comprehend. The 'Dangerous by Design' report we mentioned earlier is a 36-page paper full of amazing data and shocking maps of pedestrian fatalities in your neighborhood. But it took Raquel's story to help our audience understand and become concerned about the real consequences of the problem. The report alone was not enough to turn casual readers into activists ready to take action. But the story inspired people to sign the petition, retweet the articles, and tell their own similar pedestrian stories to friends and city council members.
- **Shape identities.** The stories we tell define the way our audiences identify with us and/or our issue. Take this very whitepaper for instance. What if we had opened with a sob story about how sleep deprived the BP execs were during the Gulf oil spill? How would that change your perception of M+R?
- **Make connections.** Each of us has a circle around us. No one can see the circle, but it keeps us from wasting time with people or information we don't think will be useful or helpful. Before we let people into our circle we want to know that they get us and we like to feel that we get them. Ten minutes ago, Raquel Nelson was a stranger to you. You've still never met her, but thanks to her story you feel like you know her enough to care about her fate and are curious enough to ask what can be done to prevent this from happening to me or anyone else.

Do you still need some convincing? Okay, pop quiz! Match each of these individuals with his or her cause:

Rosa Parks	Iraq War
Ryan White	Women's Health
Matthew Shepard	Civil Rights
Sandra Fluke	Gun Control
Cindy Sheehan	Wildlife Conservation
James Brady	AIDS
Jane Goodall	Hate Crimes

Now match each of these statistics with a cause:

3.1 million	U.S. Green Jobs
5 million	Alzheimer's
50%	The Pentagon
250,000	Darfur
2.2 million	Federal Employees
17 million	U.S. Food Aid

How many answer keys do you need? Only one? Yeah, we figured. That is the power of a story.

Each of the individuals listed above had personal stories that captivated the media and public, elevating their issue higher than any data-driven report, rally, or organizational spokesperson ever could on its own.

These legendary examples may feel daunting. But don't be deterred. All of these stories – even the instantly famous ones – started off as needles in a haystack when it came to the cause they helped launch or push forward.

Why does storytelling *via the media* matter?

Despite pre-dating cave paintings, the subject of storytelling has never been more popular. Chances are that in the last few years you have read the Heath brothers' thoughts on stories that stick or heard the aforementioned Jonah Sachs' thoughts on

storytelling and marketing. Perhaps you even have a copy of M+R's sister-whitepaper [Storytelling and the Art of Email Writing](#) in your desk drawer.

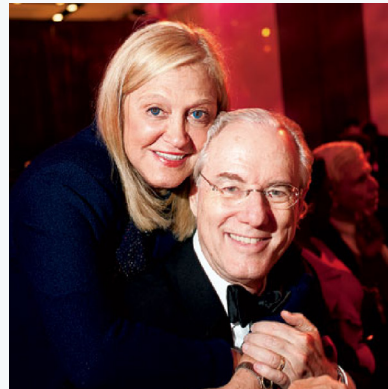
So what else is there to say?

Yes, everyone has a story to tell and every story has value. But not everyone's story is a match for media. It takes a special kind of story to compel a reporter to write about an issue and then catch an everyday person's attention beyond the first paragraph in a newspaper article or the first 10 seconds of a broadcast story. And that's what's different in this storytelling whitepaper.

A Daughter's Story

After Alzheimer's killed Trish Vradenburg's mother, she was mad. She didn't see enough being done to stop the cruel disease. So she and her husband George founded [USAgainstAlzheimer's](#) to fight back.

There are plenty of scary statistics about Alzheimer's, a disease that is currently killing 5 million Americans. By the time you turn 65, there's a 1-in-8 chance that you'll have Alzheimer's. These are strong numbers. But they haven't made enough headlines or convinced enough elected officials to champion the cause.



That is until the statistics are wrapped up in Trish's story.

It's personal stories like Trish's that have caused the organization to be featured in places like Fox News Sunday and *Washingtonian Magazine*. Everyone with a parent can relate to Trish's pain. And after hearing her side of the story, the "1-in-8" stops being a number. Suddenly it's a family member you're scared of losing – or a reminder of the one you already lost.

The tone of Trish's story has also elevated the organization in the minds of supporters. When you read Trish's story, you don't picture a woman hunched over a box of Kleenex. You see a boxer tying her laces, getting ready to kick Alzheimer's ass.

By telling her story in the media, Trish has energized thousands of other Americans to join her in the ring and tell their own stories. At last count, USAgainstAlzheimer's boasts 55,149 activists on Facebook — a 5500% increase in just over one year.

Instead of asking the usual question, "What kind of story will cause people to care?" – we're here to help you ask (and answer) another important question: "What kind of

story will attract reporters so it is told credibly as well as far and wide?”

Our goal for the rest of this whitepaper is to help you identify press-worthy stories and then get them in good shape to share with reporters.

At M+R we’re familiar with the many ways to tell stories in campaigns or to support causes – emails to supporters, constituent visits with congressional staff, animated videos shared on Facebook. But sometimes campaigns and nonprofits need an assist from the news media to gain power and momentum.

How do you know when the news media is the right medium to tell a story?

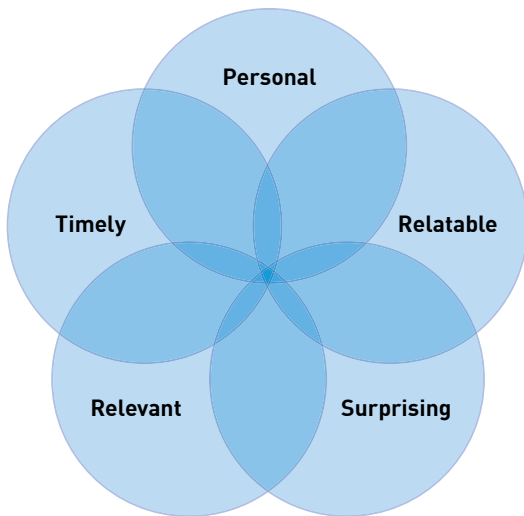
Do you want to reach, educate and/or influence new audiences?	✓	YES	NO
Do you want to remind current supporters you’re still relevant?	✓	YES	NO
Do you want to get complicated yet compelling data or a report in the hands of people who could or should be using it?	✓	YES	NO
Do you want decision makers to know that their constituents and influential people are on your side?	✓	YES	NO
And do you want to do all of this in an objective way that gives your cause credibility?	✓	YES	NO

If you answered yes, then read on because you should be telling stories in the media to help win on your issue.

What makes a powerful story for media?

The news media offers a loud microphone for your story to be heard by millions. So what is it that reporters, editors, and producers are looking for when they’re scanning their inboxes for stories to tell?

From our experience pitching stories and experts to reporters, these are the qualities that make a story press-worthy:



- **Personal:** A person's life is affected by a situation.
- **Relatable:** You can imagine being in the situation – and you don't like it.
- **Surprising:** The situation is unheard of or opposite of what you'd expect.
- **Relevant:** The story adds to a conversation or is related to an issue currently happening in your community or state, on Capitol Hill, or across the country.
- **Timely:** The time to tell that story is now.

A Federal Employee's Story

"We feel like we've been abandoned. We are a punching bag and we are being beat up constantly. I've seen some people in tears. It really hurts. I really love my job but we just can't put up with it anymore." – Jenny Votapka, a federal employee in Montana with 35 years of service

It's easy for Congress to repeatedly pick on federal workers as a quick budget fix. Americans don't often have a reason to stop and think about the people who inspect our spinach or give a seal of approval to the toys we give to our kids. That's why the National Active and Retired Federal Employee's Association ([NARFE](#)) has been busy the last couple of years telling the stories of federal workers.

One such story that caught the attention of *The Washington Post* was from a Montana woman who tended to the needs of the national forest service in her state. When we first heard it, we knew that Jenny's story had the makings of an awesome media story.

To Jenny, the issue was bigger than any pay cut. As her voice cracked during the press conference, you could tell that she felt personally attacked by Congress. Anyone whose hard work has ever been unappreciated could put themselves in her shoes. Jenny's story was also surprising – she wasn't "one of those" DC bureaucrats Americans think of when they think of federal employees. Lastly, her story was relevant to the national discussion about how to trim the budget and timely because there was a congressional vote on federal worker benefits scheduled later in the week.

Had we discovered that Jenny lived in a McMansion in a North Virginia suburb, her story would have been significantly less personal, relatable, surprising, and thus less press-worthy.

For the record, federal workers won the vote later that week.

How do you place your powerful story in the media?

Now you know why you'd tell a person's story in the media and what types of stories make headlines. That's all well and good – but how do you actually do it?

We could build a college course around these next five tips sections. But for now we hope this overview gives you a good foundation to start collecting and telling stories for your cause.

1. Get powerful stories

Remember Raquel? She didn't walk into our lobby one day and say, "Let's tell my story together." We caught wind of her story and worked with Transportation for America to engage her and spread the word.

Collecting stories to tell in the news media is a big and time-consuming job. It's worth it though when you see the big (or at least effective) results.

To make sure you leave no stone unturned when looking for stories, we suggest using multiple methods, including:

- *Storybanking*. Ask your supporters or your partners to submit their stories either through an online form or a paper handout at your next gathering. Let people know you want their stories in your newsletter and over social media, listservs, and forums. Don't forget to capture their contact information!
- *Social media*. Scan Twitter and your organization's own Facebook page to see who is active on your issue that you can reach out to directly.
- *Reading A LOT*. Pay attention to the media narrative around your topic and when you see a story match, be courteous but not shy about engaging the person.

2. Vet your stories

Getting great stories is a good start. Next, let the vetting begin.

We may think we're constantly scouting stories – but if scouting isn't built into your day, then you can be doing more.

If you're lucky you will receive more stories than you can use. Don't allow quantity to

become the enemy of quality. First narrow down your options by seeing which stories meet the press-worthy story criteria.

A Mom's Story

In the fight for clean air, some of the most press-worthy stories (personal, relatable, surprising) are about kids whose asthma is triggered by air pollution in their communities. The [American Lung Association](#) was bursting with data proving the health consequences of dirty air. But they had very few real stories to bring the charts to life and make headlines.



We helped the organization get and vet a targeted storybank so we could offer families affected by dirty air to interested reporters. Many of the stories were referred to us by asthma family support groups in states with politicians we wanted to influence.

When we called one mom in Pennsylvania for our vetting call, she sounded like a medical dictionary when describing how she cared for her two young asthmatic children. So far so good. She was also familiar with the American Lung Association but she wasn't sure why we'd be calling her about the Clean Air Act. She had never connected the dots before that the coal-burning power plant down the street from her house was contributing to her kids' asthma.

We started to doubt whether she was a good story-teller for the campaign after all. But then she said something that locked her in at the top of our storybank: "I support whatever it takes so I never again have to tell my eight-year-old he can't play soccer with his team today because the air will make him sick."

Once your storybank is a manageable size, it's time to contact the people who rise to the top of your list. Before you pick up the phone, create a vetting guide of questions you're going to ask people to help move along the conversation.

The best vetting calls actually start by giving your contacts a chance to vet you and get to know your organization some more. Most people you speak with will have never done anything like this before. So be open about your goals, how they might be able to help you, and what they should expect in terms of results and from you.

When it's time to start asking your questions, ease into it so it feels more like a discussion than an interrogation. Once you've broken the ice, start drilling down on the personal details of their story. These are the golden nuggets that will shine in your pitches to reporters as they pan through their crowded inboxes.

Listen sincerely – but also don't be afraid of interrupting and moving the conversation along. People are looking for guidance from you about what you want to know and won't be offended if you steer them back on track.

Before hanging up the phone, find out exactly what kind of media exposure the story-teller is comfortable with. Don't take for granted how brave it is for a person to tell their personal stories in the media – especially on the kind of campaign you're likely running. Some people are game for and good at national TV if there's an opportunity while others are only ready to write a letter to the editor. Respect their readiness and strengths and build on it over time.

3. Organize your stories

At this step in the process, your brain can start to feel frazzled. You may even feel overwhelmed right now just reading about getting and vetting press-worthy stories. So let's take a minute to talk about organization.

Keeping and updating a simple database of your stories is so important. If you don't make a point to keep track of your stories and make notes

Please keep it simple. Don't let over-organization undermine your organization effort. A 6-column Excel doc or Google Spreadsheet is all you need for a great storybank. Suggested column headers: Name, City, 5-Word Story (for your convenience), Paragraph Story (for press pitches), Media Comfort, and Notes

on your conversations, you may as well not even collect stories. Without organization at the outset, you will reach a point after a few weeks where the list of stories you have grows too unwieldy and your memories of conversations you had with people fade. And when this happens, the natural response is to walk away and let the stories continue to collect dust.

Does this warning already ring true? It's not too late to refresh the story databank you've been sitting on for the last year (or three). Go back to #2, narrow your list, and rekindle the relationship with your top story-tellers. We bet they'll be happy to hear from you.

4. Let your stories loose!

As you write your pitches to reporters, match the stories to the right type of media. What's a better fit for each of your stories – morning TV, op-ed, radio, local feature, *Time* cover story?

Customize your story pitches for the medium you have in mind. Don't forget to include those personal details that bring your pitch to life and help paint a picture for the reporter of what their story could eventually be. Speaking of pictures, if you have a photo of the people you're pitching you should include it in the email.

When you get that email back from a reporter that says, "I'm interested," your job is not done. Reconnect with your story-tellers and prepare them for the interview. Provide talking points, do mock interviews with them, practice trick questions and pivoting back to the main message, and praise them to build up their confidence. You should also offer to join the call and listen – or accompany them if it's an in-person interview.

A Green Business' Story

During our work with the Rockefeller Foundation and [Blue Green Alliance](#) promoting American green jobs, we unearthed a story made for media. Jerry Holt is a wind worker in Pennsylvania who spoke with President Obama during his visit to the Fairless Hill wind turbine plant. Jerry was worried that if the wind production tax credit expired, he and his coworkers would lose their jobs.

We worked with Jerry in the fall of 2012 to place an op-ed about his concerns, initially pitching it to the Philadelphia Inquirer, the largest regional paper. When we didn't get any bites with the Inquirer we tried CNN.com thinking the national issue would be appealing. Nada.

We were open with Jerry that the op-ed approach wasn't working. And we asked if he'd be comfortable talking with reporters if we tried pitching news articles instead. He said yes. So we turned our attention to pitching Jerry's story to regional reporters in Pennsylvania. A business reporter at the Philly Inquirer took us up on the offer and the next day Jerry's story and plea to preserve the wind tax credit was featured on the front page of the business section.

Our persistence and Jerry's patience paid off in the press and in the real world. In an eleventh hour vote to extend the wind tax credit through 2013, both of Pennsylvania's senators voted yes.

Tax credit lives, but wind not whipping

A Langhorne turbine plant is not planning to increase production, but sees long-term help.

By Andrew Maykuth
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The extension of the federal wind-power tax credit as part of the fiscal cliff package was hailed as a victory Wednesday by renewable power advocates.

But a Bucks County wind-turbine manufacturer, where much of the workforce was furloughed in September because of a slowdown in orders, is unlikely to ramp up production any time soon because of the last-minute congressional rescue of the tax credit.

"I think it will take a little while for this to work its way to the manufacturing sector, but it will be a stimulus," said David J. Rosenberg, the vice president of marketing for Gamesa USA, the Spanish wind-turbine manufacturer with U.S. headquarters in Langhorne.

The production tax credit was due to expire at the end of 2012, which sparked a frenzy of construction to bring a record amount of wind turbines into operation by Dec. 31. But uncertainty over the continuation of the credit meant that few new orders are in the works, and wind developers and manufacturers have laid off their staffs.

Gamesa's plant in Fairless Hills is scheduled to complete its last order in a See **TAX CREDIT** on A12



A Gamesa wind turbine. More than half the company's unionized workers are laid off.

If you don't get that email back from a reporter, stay dogged! Good placements don't necessarily happen overnight, even with the best personal story in your pocket. Try new angles and new outlets. At the same time, update your story-teller so she doesn't feel like she wasted her time. It's easy for people to get sky-high expectations and think they're going to be on the evening news. So be upfront and explain at the outset and throughout that the pitching process can take time.

5. Keep your story-tellers engaged

Maintaining relationships with the people in your storybank after the first pitch can be a challenge. But you have to do it so that you can count on your story-tellers in the future. It's natural for them to wonder what's happening on an issue a month after you've done some intense media work together. And it's understandable that they might get frustrated after dedicating time talking with you without an immediate media hit to show for results. Keeping story-tellers in the loop about what you're doing and hearing back from reporters and decision makers will help ease their curiosity and frustration and keep them involved for the next push.

Your simple database will help you with this correspondence. Here are some more tips from the best pitchers on our media team to nurture your ongoing relationship with story-tellers:

- After the initial push of a story, reassess which stories are likely to be effective in the future. You may find that you may need to narrow your story pool again in order to maintain the essential relationships.
- Whenever there is a big update on the issue, send your story-tellers a short note letting them know.
- Find a way to feature their story even if it doesn't make the news cycle. Include the story in a report, write a Facebook post about it, or showcase it in your organization's newsletter.
- If you go the social media route, take the opportunity to invite other supporters to share their stories.
- Consider treating them like your super-activists – invite them to an 'insider' campaign call, send them monthly updates, have a campaign staffer call them directly to check in/refresh once every 3 months.
- Say thank you in a special way. We all communicate in email a lot. Something as simple as picking up the phone will really show your appreciation.

Conclusion

Harnessing the power of stories takes a lot of time and energy but when the right story sticks in the media, it can give your campaign or cause a big boost.

We hope our advice about how to identify and gather stories that will attract media was helpful. We aren't able to work with every cause we care about so we want whitepapers like these to be as valuable as possible for your organization.

What other leftover questions do you have about storytelling? Or what other campaign challenges are you grappling with? We plan to host a follow-up webinar to this paper and write more guides on how to make the most out of storytelling and the media. So we would really appreciate hearing from you.

Please contact Leslie Kerns at lkerns@mrss.com with any questions or comments and we'll incorporate the feedback into our future projects.

About the Author

Leslie Kerns, Senior Vice President, Director of Campaigns, is an expert on strategic communications, media relations and integrated campaigns. A former attorney, Leslie leverages her public policy and advocacy skills to position, message and gain attention for non-profits, foundations and their campaigns. Since joining M+R in 2008, she has helped build and launch a national transportation campaign with Smart Growth America and Reconnecting America, brand a global client protection campaign targeting microfinance institutions and leaders with ACCION International, and develop an awareness campaign around juvenile justice for the MacArthur Foundation slated to launch this year. Leslie's other current and past clients include the Rockefeller Foundation, American Lung Association, USAgainstAlzheimer's, 350.org, GlobalGiving, National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, and American Jewish World Service. Leslie joined M+R after helping to build the non-profit practice at Solomon McCown & Company in Boston.

About M+R

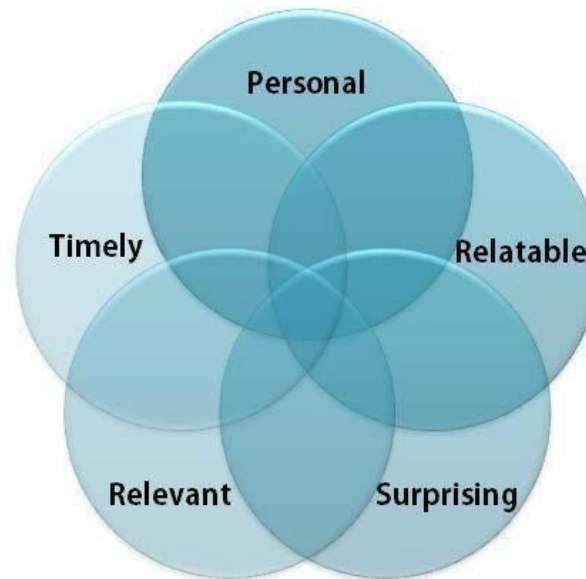
M+R Strategic Services is dedicated to helping our clients advance their missions in order to bring about positive change. We do this by helping organizations and campaigns we believe in develop smart and effective strategies, hone their messages, mobilize their members, build grassroots support, raise money, and communicate effectively with the media, the public, and decision-makers, both online and offline. Please visit www.mrss.com for more information.



Worksheet: Developing Media-Worthy Stories

Personal: Explain how a person's life is affected by the situation
Relatable: Is there something in this story that people can connect to by imagining what they would do if this happened to them?
Surprising: What about this situation is different than what people might assume or expect?
Relevant: What is the larger context for the story? (Local, state, national, global)
Timely: What makes this a good time to tell this story? Urgency?

More than data, personal stories are often the one thing that can transform a good campaign into a great campaign. There are a lot of great storytelling tools out there and one of our favorites is [Storytelling and the Power of Making Headlines](#) from M+R Strategic Services. It lays out the five must-have elements of a newsworthy story.



Ask all of your advocates to complete the worksheet above. One of their stories might be just what you need to persuade key decision-makers to give you what you want. **Pay special attention to the element of SURPRISE.** What is it about your personal experience as a body confidence advocate, the evidence of how young people are bombarded with relentless marketing, and what you know about the behavior of your peers that might surprise people? That's your magic!

Decision-Maker Meeting Feedback Form

Date of meeting: _____

Name of decision-maker: _____

Position/Title: _____

Reason this person is critical to your campaign:

Campaign priority being discussed and focus of community mobilization effort:

Name(s) of staff present: _____

Names of advocates attending meeting and relationship to decision-maker:

Was the decision-maker supportive of your position?

Yes ____ No ____ Undecided ____

Comments:

Does decision-maker have a personal relationship to your issue?

Yes ____ No ____

Please specify:

Would the decision-maker like more information on the issue?

Yes ____ No ____

Please specify:

Specifically, what is decision-maker's favorite source for news? (TV, newspapers, radio, blogs, etc.)

Following the conclusion of the meeting, has a thank-you note been sent?

Yes ____ No ____

Please send a copy or picture of your form to: