

“Nine Questions”

A Strategy Planning Tool for Policy and Environmental Change

1. What do we want? (Goals)

What are the long-term and short-term goals? What are the content goals (e.g. policy change) and what are the process goals (e.g. building the community among participants)? These goals need to be defined at the start, in a way that can launch an effort, get people involved, and be sustained.

2. Who can give it to us? (Audience)

Who are the people and institutions you need to move? This includes those who have the actual formal authority to deliver the goods (i.e. policymakers). This also includes those who have the capacity to influence those with authority (i.e. the media and key constituents).

3. What do they need to hear? (Message)

Craft and frame a set of messages that will be persuasive to the different audiences. Although the messages must be rooted in the same basic truth, they also need to be tailored differently to different audiences. In most cases, policy or environmental change messages will have two basic components: an appeal to what is right and an appeal to the audience's self-interest.

4. Who do they need to hear it from? (Messengers)

The same message has a different impact depending on who communicates it. Who are the most credible messengers for the different audiences? What do we need to do to equip these messengers, both in terms of information and to increase their comfort level as advocates?

5. How can we get them to hear it? (Delivery)

There are numerous ways for advocates to deliver the message. The most effective varies from situation to situation. The key is to evaluate and apply them appropriately.

6. What have we got? (Resources)

Take careful stock of the resources that already exists or need to be built on. Take a look at staff, information, alliances and other people's capacity. You don't need to start from scratch.

7. What needs to be developed? (Gaps)

What resources are you missing? Identify what pieces are missing and who can help fill the gaps.

8. Where do we begin? (First Steps)

Look at short-term goals or projects that would bring people together. Create something achievable that lays the groundwork for the next step.

9. Is it working? (Evaluation)

Strategy needs to be evaluated at the beginning, middle and end of the campaign. It's important to discard any elements that don't work once they are put into practice.