

## Putting More Power in Your Campaign Punch: The Power Prism

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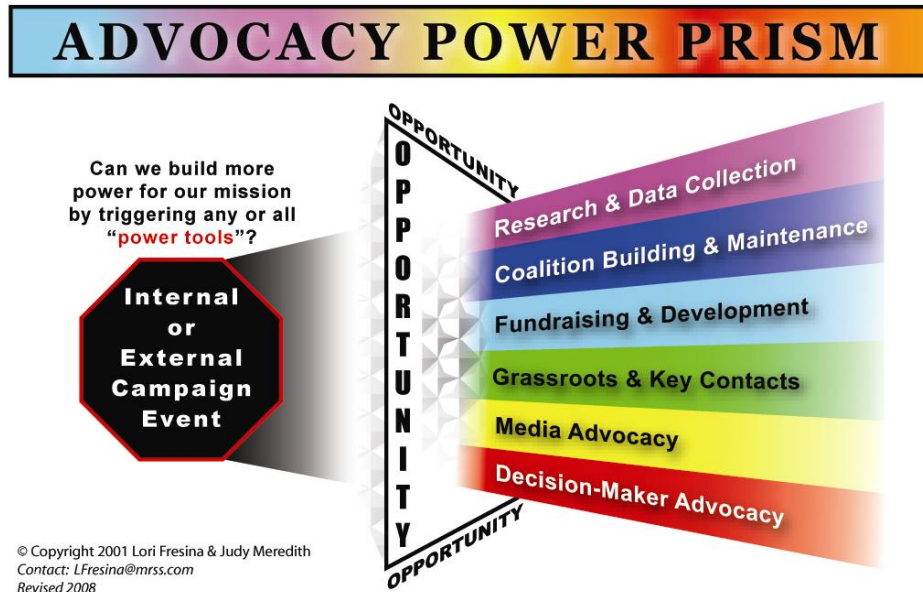
In every advocacy campaign, a new day is a new chance to maximize the reach of your issues—whether responding to a media event with a letter to the editor or making a campaign catchphrase into a catchy video for YouTube. So it doesn't hurt to take a moment in any campaign to stop and think, "How can we make the most of this opportunity?"

The **Power Prism** is a step-by-step model for recognizing and acting on opportunities in order to build momentum behind your advocacy campaigns. The Power Prism is built on six "power tools" of advocacy that will help you seize on even the smallest campaign opportunity and thoughtfully take action toward reaching your goals. Advocacy, after all, is about getting the results you want.

The Power Prism model works for long-term advance planning as well as minute-by-minute campaigning. Here's how...

### Building Power, Step-by-Step

From research and data collection to lobbying, the six Power Prism "power tools" are the essential levers through which you can apply pressure in order to reach your policy goals:



Let's say "something" happens and your staff is poised to act. That "something" can be an **internal event**, such as hosting a press event, enlisting a new coalition member, filing legislation, releasing the results of a poll, launching a new campaign, or a taking a community-based action. Or it can be an **external event**, like an editorial on your issue, newly proposed legislation (bad or good), the passage or failure of similar legislation in another state, or proposed funding cuts.

No matter what the event – i.e., the opportunity – the power tools are the same. As you work your way through the six power-building elements, you should be able to answer the following questions:

#### **Research & Data Collection:**

- What information do you need to advance your goals?
- Do you know your decision makers?
- Have you polled voters and focus groups, scanned for media coverage, and collected information about the opposition?
- Are your policy goals data-driven? Do you have state, local, and federal information?

#### **Coalition Building & Maintenance:**

- Are there other organizations that share your mission/vision?
- Are there other organizations that embrace your tactics and strategies to fulfill their own goals?
- What organizations are of strategic interest to you?

#### **Fundraising and Development:**

- Are you sharing good information with past, current and prospective funders?
- Before approaching prospects, do you have two budgets – one that’s “bare bones” and one that’s a “fantasy”?
- Do you have the skills/knowledge/relationships to tap into funding?
- What are your potential sources of funding to cover expenses?
- What can you get others to kick in for free?
- Are you able to raise political *and* program dollars?

#### **Grassroots & Key Contacts:**

- Who is your core constituency?
- Who is your target constituency, and where/how can you find them?
- How can you organize them?
- How can you connect them to relevant decision makers?
- Do you have easy reach to key “grasstops” contacts?
- Do you have online and offline grassroots action items?

#### **Media Advocacy:**

- Do you have the tools you need, such as “how tos” about press releases, editorial board visits, media advisories, letters to the editor, etc.?
- How will you get to know them better?
- Have your legislative allies been briefed on pending actions important to your cause?
- Are you creating “hero” opportunities for legislative allies?
- Are you a presence in the sphere of influence?

#### **Lobbying & Legislative Advocacy:**

- What do you know about the decision makers?
- How will you get to know them?
- Have your legislative allies been briefed on pending actions important to your cause?
- Are you creating “hero” opportunities for legislative allies?
- Are you a presence in the sphere of influence?

## So When Can the Power Prism Model Be Used?

The Power Prism model should gently force you out of your normal “comfort zone” and into places where maybe you haven’t ventured before. Every internal or external event is a chance to use the Power Prism’s power tools to build momentum behind your campaign.

Here’s a good example:

The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Vermont took a relatively small and un-sexy event – a poll – and squeezed all the juice they could out of it! The group asked voters in early 2006 if they supported an 81-cent tobacco tax—more than 75% of voters said they did. The coalition then:

- *Researched* the benefits of a tax;
- *Built a coalition* of lawmakers, grassroots organizations and the media in support of it;
- Reached out to *grassroots and key contacts* with email action alerts; and
- Held a press conference for *fundraising and development* purposes.

Local media then picked up on the story, helping *educate legislators* about the pros of a cigarette tax.

### **The cigarette tax passed!**

After the tax bill became law, the Coalition ran paid “Thank You” ads statewide, thanking the “hero” legislators for supporting the bill.

## The Power of the Prism is Yours

After you’ve brainstormed the universe of possibilities that emerge from each power tool, narrow it down to the most important steps and come up with a plan for making it happen. Be specific. What is the next step? How will it be done? Who will be responsible for doing it and what is the deadline?

Think BIG. You can’t go wrong.