Applying Science to Advocacy for Social Change

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Overview

• Why Social Influence is Difficult
• Effective Advocacy Preparation
• Tools of Social Change
• Wrap-up and Conclusion
Where we’re at

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Activism vs. Advocacy

• Activism:
  – Direct, public effort
  – Sometimes not sustained

• Advocacy:
  – Bringing about long-term social change
  – Ultimately about behavior change
Social & Behavior Change

Advocacy for Social Change
• (Attitude &) Behavior Change
  – Within Others
  – Within Yourself
• Awareness / Empathy for how Difficult this is for Everyone
Why is social influence so difficult?

• People don’t like to give up what they have
  – The Endowment Effect

• We tend to dislike
  – Making unfamiliar choices with strategic implications
  – Any issue associated with death or destruction
    • Terror management theory & its unconscious consequence:
      – Defending one’s self-esteem and cultural worldview
  – Long-term time horizons
    • Discipline = delaying gratification

• People’s choices depend on the context
  – How you frame an issue is important!
  – Prospect Theory
Prospect Theory?

- What would you choose?
  - Gamble A: 100% chance of losing $3000
  - Gamble B: 80% chance of losing $4000, and 20% chance of losing 0

- Then:
  - Gamble C: 100% chance of winning $3000
  - Gamble D: 80% chance of winning $4000, and 20% chance of winning 0

- We’re risk-loving over prospective losses
  - (92% of people chose B)
- We’re risk-averse over prospective gains
  - (20% chose D)
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Know Your Issue Frame(s)

- An effective Frame:
  - …not what to think, but rather what to think about.

- Helps Set your Advocacy Agenda
Agenda-Setting*

The process through which an issue climbs to a higher priority in a system

* A. Singhal & E. M. Rogers, 2003
For Effective Agenda-Setting

Know your Audience(s)!

Set Effective Advocacy Goals!
Making it Specific: A Recipe for Effective Advocacy Outcomes

- Advocacy Goals are great, but...
- Setting specific ‘Outcomes’ is better

Why?

- With this *NLP* ‘Recipe’, you get:
  - Internal Locus of Control
  - Specific Implementation Intentions

*P. M. Gollwitzer & P. Sheeran (2006)*
Recipe for Well-formed Outcomes*

- Positive & in One’s Own Control
  - What do you actually want?
- Evidence
  - How will you know when you have it?
  - Sensory specific: what will you see, hear?
- Context
  - In which context do you want this? All the time?
- Impact: The But that might stop you…
  - What is the cost / benefit of this Outcome?
  - How does not having this Outcome serve you?

* From © NLP Center of New York
• One person generates an Outcome statement
• Other asks questions to help formulate a Well-formed Outcome
• Switch
Focus on your Audience(s)

• Gather Intelligence

• Yet First: Establish Rapport with People

• But how?
Let’s use the sales guys’ insights

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people, than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you.”

*Dale Carnegie*
How to do this ethically: Apply Emotional Intelligence

Components of Emotional Intelligence

• Self-awareness
• Self-regulation
• Motivation
• Empathy
• Social Skills
  – Become a “Boundary Spanner”
    – (L. Thompson, 2001)
      • People with high network power

• But how?
More on Social Skills

Borrow from Coaching: Ask-Tell Matrix*

* A. M. Grant, IPPA Presentation 2009 “Positive Psychology & Coaching”
More on Social Skills

Borrow from Coaching: Ask-Tell Matrix

“Building Relationships is Key to Social Change”
Scott Sherman, www.transformativeaction.org
How Rapport builds Trust

• Repeated contact creates a connection
  – Mere-Exposure Effect

• Often sharing only trivial information creates common ground
  – Similarly-Attraction-Effect

• Physical presence increases liking
  – Propinquity Effect
Why Trust matters in Advocacy

Advocacy Groups: Often perceived as Minority “Outgroups”

- **Ingroup identification** (especially if ingroup is threatened in some way)
- **Distrust of Outgroup** (or Threat perception)
- **Ingroup favoritism** (more or less of this)
- **Trust**
- **Ingroup favoritism** (or rather: **Interpersonal cooperation**)

“Social Aikido” (S. Sherman)
- Go beyond “Us vs. Them”
- Find Common Ground & Mutual Advantage
Motivation

MOTIVATION

If a Pretty Poster and a Cute Saying are All it Takes to Motivate You, You Probably have a Very Easy Job. The Kind Robots Will be Doing Soon.
Your Audience’s Motivation: Social Orientation

• In our Social (Value) Orientation, we tend to
  – Move towards
  – Move away from
    • Aggression, Competition, Individualism, Egalitarianism, Cooperation

• To find out about Your Audience’s Motivations
  – Listen for emphasis, repetitions when Values, Principles are mentioned
  – Actively check your understanding
Your Audience’s Motivation: Value Priorities

- We tend to live according to certain Values*, e.g.
  - Learning/Growing
  - Self-expression
  - Freedom/Independence
  - Innovate/Create
  - Partnerships/Collaborate
  - Organization/Order
  - Integrity/Honesty
  - Fun/Humor/Play
  - Connection/Intimacy
  - Adventure/Risk-Taking

- Helpful to analyze this for all your target audience groups:
  - Rank Values (on 0-10 scale)
  - Rate degree to which Value is honored by Group (from 0-10)

- Result:
  - Actual Values Matrix

* D. R. Stober & A. M. Grant (2006)
Sustainable Motivation

• How to motivate others Intrinsically
  – vs. Extrinsically
  – Money?

• The Holy Grail:
  – Autotelic Experiences
    • People driven by purpose & curiosity
Working with Others’ Motivations in Advocacy

In Mass Communication:

• Use a mix of ‘Towards’ & ‘Away’ motives
• Address major Value Sets
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Sources of Power

To have influence, you need one or more of*

- Ability to provide rewards
- Be an expert / have expertise
- Have formal authority
  - (recognized in existing power structure)
- Your attractiveness
  - People identify with you
  - People respect you & want to associate with you

The rules of minority influence

• Minorities are more influential if*
  – They are consistent in their overall message
  – Flexible in their approach
  – Appealing to the majority

• What this means:
  – Be similar to the majority in all areas other than your specific message of influence

  – Pick your battles carefully!

* S. Moscovici, E. Lage, & M. Naffrenchoux (1969)
Know How to Change Behavior

• Advocacy for Social Change:
  – (Attitude &) Behavior Change
    • Within Others
    • Within Yourself
  – Awareness / Empathy for how difficult this is
The “Integrated Model of Behavior Change”

I. Fishbein (2000)

- Underlying beliefs, personal history, traits etc.
- Attitude
- Social Norm
- Self-efficacy (perceived behavior control)
- Intention (main behavior determinant)
- Skills
- Environmental constraints
- Behavior (Behavior change)

Boosting Others’ Self-efficacy (= ‘Power’) helps counteract people's fear and their resulting tendency to dismiss advocacy
Classic principles of influence*

• Commitment & Consistency
  – “Foot in the door”
• Reciprocity: Free samples!
  – “Door in the face”
• Social Proof / Conformity with social norms
• Liking: Similarity & Attractiveness
• Authority
• Scarcity

* R. Cialdini (2006)
Asch’s (1951) Conformity study

- How can we use this for our purposes?
Powerful: Foot in the door

• What happens if you do someone a small favor?
• What happens if someone does you a small favor?

• Why?
  – We value Reciprocity
  – We have a need for Consistency
    • Cognitive dissonance
The Science of Door tricks

The scientific/ethical side of this:

- These techniques work because they
  - Put other in good mood
    - Mood as powerful motivator
  - Model the behavior you want to see
    - Social learning very powerful
Two Paths to Persuasion*

Central Route vs. Persuading Others via the Periphery

* R. E. Petty & J. T. Cacioppo (1986b)
Central Route to Persuasion

• Central Route
  – For analytical audiences, focused on facts & data
  – Message content important!
  – Message arguments: 2-sided better if other
    • Well-educated
    • Holds different opinion
    • Is familiar with issue
  – If effective: elicits enduring persuasion & commitment
Central Route Techniques

• Central Route: Use
  – Values confrontation
    • Make people aware of discrepancies
  – Prompt Perspective-Taking
    • To elicit Empathy
  – Consistency Principle
  – Fairness Heuristic
  – Package issue logically
  – Present alternatives & options
  – Time pressure helps!
Persuading via the Periphery

• Peripheral Route
  – When audience less interested or involved
  – Message source important (credible, authoritative, likeable)
  – Risk of temporary persuasion, counterinfluence
  – Message order:
    • Primacy effect if topic familiar or controversial
    • Recency effect if topic unimportant, unfamiliar
Peripheral Route Techniques

- Peripheral Route: Use
  - Simplified Message
    - Chunk the Problem down!
    - Implementation Intentions
  - Positive reinforcement
  - Personal Stories
  - Social Proof
  - Foot-in-the-Door
  - Door-in-the-Face
  - Priming
  - Humor!
  - Different senses (sound, touch etc.)
  - Value-based appeals
    - Prejudice cannot be fought with logic
  - Your humanity
Exceptions to peripheral message processing

• The (non-involved) majority tends to reject communications from (advocacy) minorities outright*

• When the (non-interested) majority hears messages from (advocacy) minorities that

Attack their character or
Collective self-esteem
Then such persuasion attempts are rejected**

* D. M. Mackie, M. C. Gastardo-Conaco, & J. J. Skelly (1992)
More Achtung

• A message that is repeatedly communicated to the (non-involved) majority becomes more acceptable

But

• The opposite effect occurs when the message is highly personally relevant (audience v. motivated)*

What does this all mean?

- Messages from your own social group are more persuasive.

- The **more** people identify with their own social group,
- The **less** they will be influenced by (advocacy) groups different from themselves.

- **The solution**: Build bridges across social divides!
  - The Return of the Trust Slide!
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- Ingroup identification (especially if ingroup is threatened in some way)
- Distrust of Outgroup (or Threat perception)
- Ingroup favoritism (more or less of this)
- Trust (or rather: Interpersonal cooperation)
- Ingroup identification (with existing or NEW social groups)

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Do you need more inspiration?

“The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him your friend.”

Abraham Lincoln
(Some) Components of Successful Social Action*

- Offer incentives
  - How about “it’s healthier to…”
- Provide procedural information
  - Guides, specific steps people can take
- Change attitudes
  - Expose the truth about harmful stuff
- Present educational opportunities
  - Host events, briefings
- Change social norms
  - E.g. “Garden weeds are beautiful! Pesticides stink.”
- Secure commitment
  - Get signatures, ask to mail in a postcard
- Enjoy success, celebrate & reevaluate/adjust

Preparing for Success

• Clear Outcome
• Behavior: Action!
• Be present: aware of feedback, other’s values
• Be flexible:
  – Learn from your mistakes
  – change your behavior in response to feedback
• Think positive
  – Prepare yourself/your team for success
  – Reaffirm outcome, positive intent periodically
Destined for Greatness

• What are the 3 only Factors predicting US Presidency?

  1. Height,
  2. Small family of origin size,
  3. Number of books published prior to Presidency*

* D. K. Simonton (1987)

• This is what you should be doing:
  – Construct a compelling vision for the future
    • Use everything you’ve got for this!

• Why?
  – Self-fulfilling Prophecy & Stereotype Threat
We’re all Leaders

“The task of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths, making our weaknesses irrelevant.”

Peter Drucker
Further Reading

www.nudges.org
www.toolsofchange.com
www.transformativeaction.org
http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/
www.changemakers.com
www.cred.columbia.edu/guide/

Working for Peace: A Handbook of Practical Psychology And Other Tools, edited by R. Macnair
Thank You!

• For any comments or questions, email jtobias@spsssi.org or call 202-675-6956.