

# TACTICS

Tactics: Specific actions used against primary and secondary targets to show power

Tactics are the specific actions that must be taken to carry out the overall strategy. When thinking about our tactics, we first must identify the target(s). A target is someone who has the power to give us what we want. For example, a police chief might be a target. A company CEO might be a target, an Attorney General might be a target.

Since a tactic is something we use on a target (or do to him or her) to force a particular action, we must have a clear understanding of why a person is a target. What does he or she have the ability to do to change the outcome of our situation? Once we know why a person is a target, then we determine his or her weaknesses or vulnerabilities. Does the target depend on large numbers of people visiting his restaurant to keep him in business? If so, then that is his vulnerability. Does the target need votes to win an election? If so, then that is her vulnerability. In other words, we identify a weakness and then use it to get what we want. Keep in mind that targets are always specific people, not conglomerates and not institutions. For example, "the police" is not a target. "City council" is not a target. We need the name or names of the specific people who have the power to make a decision in our favor. John Smith, Chief of Fairfield Police is a target. Mayor John Smith is a target. District Attorney John Smith is a target.

Targets may be primary or secondary. A primary target is the focus of our actions; it is the person (or persons) who has the power to make the decision to give us what we want. However, sometimes we do not have enough power to directly influence the primary target. But, another person or group may have this power. If that is the case, then that person or group becomes our secondary target. In a sense, we target this person or group in order to use them to pressure the primary target.

When sufficient pressure is used on the target, he or she may make small concessions that fall short of our goal. The team should decide whether it is willing to negotiate with the target. If so, then on what points and on what terms? This is tricky business. Sometimes a small win is better than no win at all. Getting some but not all of what we want is an indicator that we have enough power to be taken seriously but not enough power to force an absolute victory. Sometimes it is appropriate to accept a negotiated win and then go build more power to keep fighting for the ultimate win. At other times, a negotiated win does us absolutely no good because it does not get us any closer to our goal. Those in power know that offering small or meaningless concessions can sometimes get us to go away.

In addition to identifying our targets, we must also assess our resources. Who or what do we have at our disposal that could help us exert power over the target? Do we have any money? Do we have any powerful allies to form a coalition? Do we have a voting block that could prevent a target from getting elected or re-elected? Will we need lawyers? Do media appear to be on our side? Do we have access to information and/or data?

When planning tactics, we must decide whether to collaborate with other groups. Collaboration can be a positive experience as long as the groups share common goals and also agree on some of the same tactics. We can never have too much support! A *coalition* is a group of people from different organizations who work together to solve a problem. Although coalition members may maintain their own unique identities, it is important that they appear unified when taking action. Your own organization must

weigh the pros and cons of forming a coalition with a particular group or organization. This assessment should be done before any agreement is made.

How do you know which tactics will be most effective?

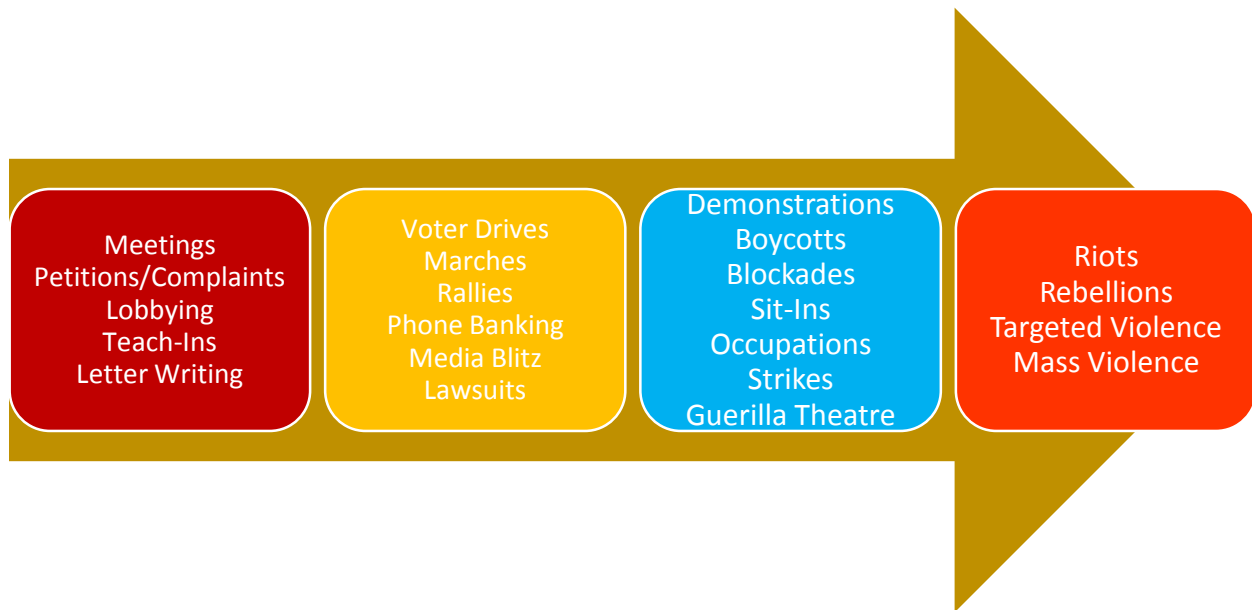
- Tactics must be guided by your strategy
- Tactics must be connected to specific demands
- Tactics should help you win
- The best tactics are those that are within your participants' realm of experience and outside your target's realm of experience
- Tactics should show power and exert pressure on your target
- Tactics should get your supporters involved and help build solidarity
- Tactics must be feasible/do-able for those who will carry them out

Questions to Consider When Planning Tactics:

1. Which tactics will be most effective on each of our targets? How do we know?
2. Do we have enough people to successfully implement this tactic? How can we mobilize them?
3. Do we have enough resources to successfully implement this tactic?
4. Do these tactics help or harm the organization? Do they help or harm our allies?
5. When, where, and how will we implement these tactics?
6. What is our back-up plan?

# Tactics Continuum

Influential-----Persuasive-----Disruptive-----Violent



Influential tactics are designed to raise awareness about an issue and/or educate the public and decision makers about why the issue is important. We use these tactics to promote public discussion, to get support for persuasive or disruptive escalations, and to pressure our opponent.

Persuasive tactics draw even more attention to an issue, get more people involved, require significantly more direct coordination, and create more pressure on our opponent. Persuasive tactics are often designed to embarrass an opponent or to help him see the error of his ways. There are many ways to persuade a target, but it is typically done by embarrassing the person, or negotiating something that the target wants or needs.

Disruptive tactics do just that—they disrupt the normal flow of business, livelihood, or engagement. The point is to create a crisis that demands

immediate attention and forces our opponent to address the matter swiftly and in our favor. When using disruptive tactics, we want to dramatize the conflict in a way that causes the public to be outraged and committed to change. Our power over the opponent is shown by our ability to cause him or her to be consistently inconvenienced and on the defensive until they change. These tactics must be sustained until the injustice is eliminated, which means they require significantly more commitment.

Violent tactics are used to cause a shock and to draw immense attention to a wrongdoing. These tactics draw immediate attention because of their severity, create instability, and intend to force action. Violent tactics can and do create the opposite effect that was intended.

Remember: Civil Disobedience is limited to non-violent actions.