



# EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING FOR ANIMALS

Planning and Delivering Effective Campaigns

This document seeks to share ideas and strategies to make your campaigning for animals a success. It doesn't provide an exhaustive list of approaches to effective campaigning but rather shares what has worked for Born Free USA over the years in our work for animals and the environment. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve this guide, please reach out to [info@bornfreeusa.org](mailto:info@bornfreeusa.org).

**We are always happy to connect and hear from you!**



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## WHAT ALL CAMPAIGNS SHARE

No matter whether you are campaigning on behalf of humans or animals, every campaign shares at least two common factors:

**1. Someone, somewhere has expressed the desire to change something (possibly you!).**

**2. The only way that change can be achieved is by influencing other people to take action.**



## START BY DEFINING THE PROBLEM

You have just learned about a serious problem, and you are passionate about fixing it. Where do you begin?

While it may be tempting to jump right in and hit the ground running with your campaign, it is smart to put in some background work to ensure that you have all of the information before you begin. The next pages will guide you through the process of really understanding your problem from as many perspectives as possible. This will help you to build your campaign in the most strategic way possible.

The following pages offer questions that are designed to allow you to build a comprehensive picture of the issue you hope to tackle.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK

### **What is the problem?**

Ensure that you can articulate the problem effectively and in a way that will speak to your audience when the time comes to launch your campaign.

### **Why is this a problem?**

This question helps you to put your problem into context. Ensure you can explain why to someone who has absolutely no prior knowledge of the issue.

### **Who does the problem affect?**

While the obvious answer might be “animals”, think carefully about who else might be impacted. For example, if you are concerned about mink farming, you might also consider that the local community is impacted by effluent runoff from the farm. Wild populations of mink might also be impacted by disease spread from the mink on the farm. Knowing the scope of your problem will help you later in your campaign delivery.

### **Why hasn't it been fixed yet?**

This question will help you to identify known obstacles which will help when you come to plan your campaign activities

### **How long has the problem been going on?**

Is this a new issue or has it been around for some time? How does this information help or hinder us in our work?



### **Can we identify who or what is causing the problem?**

There may be multiple groups of people who are contributing to the problem. For example, in the case of a mink farm we can identify the owners of the farm, as well as designers which use mink fur in their products, those that sell mink fur, and consumers who purchase mink fur. Understanding who is causing the problem can help us to effectively target our campaign.

### **Who can fix the problem?**

This may be the same list of people as those causing the problem or it may be someone else. For example, in the case of mink farms, we can appeal to the owners of the farms to stop, we can demand that designers reject mink fur, we can ask retailers to stop stocking fur, and we can ask the public to go fur free. One or more of these may be effective. In addition, though, we can also appeal to government or local authorities to implement bans on the import, manufacture, or sale of fur within their jurisdictions.

### **Can we identify any of the steps required to fix the problem?**

This question might take us down a number of different paths and there are multiple ways to solve any one problem. Expanding on the answer above, a way of stopping fur farming is to protest retail stores which stock mink to encourage them to stop. Another way is to have legislators implement bans. Activities that can be carried out in the meantime is education of the general public to encourage them to reject fur. No one of these approaches is right or wrong and all can contribute to the wider goal of an end to fur farming.



### **Who is on my side?**

Understanding “who is with me” is vital for any new campaign; not least because if people are already doing great work on the issue, you may want to join forces and work together instead of setting up something new. If others are doing similar work which you think you can complement, reach out and see if they are interested in strategizing with you. Find out who else might support your campaign before you begin. This might include other organizations or activists, experts, journalists, law makers, retailers, local communities. These people are all potential allies in your campaign.

### **Who is against me?**

The answers to this question might be obvious. To return to the issue of mink farming, you can assume that mink farmers might be against your campaign. However, there may be others who disagree with you, and it makes sense to try and identify those people before you begin. For example, a lawmaker whose constituency contains mink farms might be concerned about the livelihoods of their people and be resistant to change. A local community who relies on mink farms for employment might be opposed to change. An industry body representing the fur industry might not only be against your campaign, but may have significant political sway, too. Knowing these things is vitally important for you to be able to strategize your campaign approaches and avoid being blindsided by unexpected challenges.

### **How long do we have to fix this problem?**

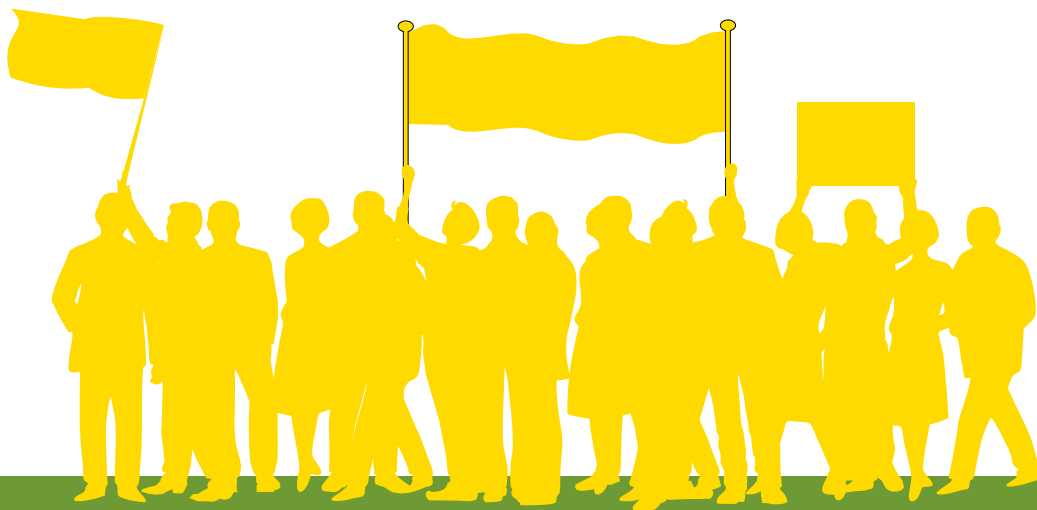
While we want to fix the problem as soon as we can, many campaigns will not have specific end-dates and will continue until you are successful. However, other campaigns – such as one to prevent a specific animal being killed, or to prevent the import of a group of elephants from their natural home to a zoo – will have a particular cut off date. Ensure that you know if your campaign has a time limit, and plan accordingly.



## WHOSE ACTIONS CAN INFLUENCE OR FIX THE PROBLEM?

Next, it is important to consider which people or groups have the power to fix or improve your problem. These can include broad as well as very specific groups and individuals, such as:

The general public	A specific local community	Officials (government, police, etc.)
The government	A particular business or industry	A specific person with decision making power
Your organization's supporters	Experts in this field of work	Other campaign groups





# WHAT DO THESE AUDIENCES NEED TO DO FOR MY CAMPAIGN TO BE A SUCCESS?

Let's look at a couple of examples of how to analyze the individuals and groups that can help fix or solve your problem.

## Vegan Diet Campaign

- The general public, OR
- A section of the general public...
  - University students
  - Parents with young children
- Businesses that might increase their range of vegan foods



## Wild Animal Circus Ban

- The circuses
- The general public
- Other animal advocates
- Veterinarians/wildlife experts
- Regional/state/federal governments







## DEFINE THE STAGES OF YOUR CAMPAIGN

When you think about who can fix the problem, you may have to break the solution to your problem down in stages. A good example of this might be the use of animals in circuses.

### Wild Animal Circus Ban Campaign

**Stage One:** Working with animal advocates, protests are arranged to encourage the circuses to give up the use of animals and to encourage families in the local community who might otherwise visit the circus to boycott.

**Stage Two:** As more and more people reject circuses with animals, circus protests increase, and the media is engaged to spread the message to the general public who, in turn boycott the circus. You may utilize experts to weigh in on the issue and to garner wider coverage. Circuses may, at this stage, begin to go animal free in response to public pressure and the impact that boycott has on their income.

**Stage Three:** When it is clear that there is widespread support for the campaign, local, state, or federal government can be encouraged by their constituents (the general public) to implement bans at local or federal levels.

There will likely be different groups of people who can have an impact which contributes to the overall goal. Not all groups will be active at all times. Figuring out how to work with different groups at different stages of your campaign will help you to be as strategic as possible.



## DEVISE YOUR KEY MESSAGES AND DON'T DEVIATE

Key messages are a way in which to frame your issue and ensure that the way you speak about it is both consistent and clear for your audiences. Ensuring that you have developed a set of clear key messages will aid you in media and public engagement and ensure that you don't go off track when engaging with others.

As an example, key messages from a campaign to end primates being kept as pets might look like this:

### **Campaign to End Keeping Primates as Pets: Key Messages**

- The trade in primates as pets is cruel and compromises welfare.
- The trade in primates as pets jeopardizes wild populations and damages conservation efforts.
- The practice of keeping such socially and intellectually complex animals as pets is unethical.
- Current legislation does not protect primates.
- Therefore, only a ban will fix this problem.



## PULL IT ALL TOGETHER INTO A CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

By now, you should be able to pull together everything we have reviewed so far into a campaign overview. This means...

- ✓ Your campaign problem is concisely summarized.
- ✓ You know who has the power to fix the problem.
- ✓ You know who needs to be influenced in order to fix the problem.
- ✓ You have divided the people that you will engage with throughout your campaign into difference audiences, who you will deal with differently.
- ✓ You have decided what it is you need to ask your audiences to do in broad terms in order to reach success.
- ✓ You have devised your key messages.





## A NOTE ON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Before you move onto working out the tools that you will use to deliver your campaign, remember these few points.

**People need to know what to do about a problem.** Simply restating it will not affect change. Be sure to know what you are asking people to do.

**People respond to stories, not statistics.** While the numbers involved in animal exploitation are mind-boggling, simply stating the numbers can fall flat. Using stories of individual animals impacted by cruelty can help people to connect with your issue. Use statistics as well to help people understand the scale but know that it is stories that people most respond to.

**Different audiences might require different approaches.** For example, animal lovers will respond to the suffering of mink on fur farms, but local communities might be more urgently concerned with contaminated water supplies. Be sure to speak to your audiences.

**People respond to praise.** While many people will take action because they feel it is the right thing to do, they will continue to follow and work with you if you recognize their hard work and commitment. Thank people regularly, update them on progress that they have helped to secure, treat them as members of your team.

**People want to be meaningfully involved.** So often, we hear animal activists asking people to “help us to help the animals.” Try cutting yourself out of the picture. Ask people to “Help the animals.” This helps people to see what they are doing and to really feel part of the campaign.

# YOUR CAMPAIGN TOOLBOX

- Social media, Internet, online petitions
- The media
- Government lobbying
- Protests, events, etc.
- Education and raising awareness
- Expert opinion and celebrity endorsement
- Meetings

The list of tools on the following pages are not exhaustive but they may help you build and deliver your campaign. It is likely that you will use a combination of tools during the lifetime of your campaign. The following pages discuss some of the pros and cons, and potential pitfalls, to each of them.



## SOCIAL MEDIA, INTERNET, ONLINE PETITIONS

Social media is a great way of communicating quickly to a large audience but be aware that “liking”, sharing, or commenting on something online might not have a meaningful impact on your campaign. Indeed, commenting on posts on social media that you do not agree with – even with the intent of educating those who might not be aware of the issue – can lead to problematic posts getting more visibility and even receiving monetary gain! Use social media smartly and remember that you might be speaking within something of an echo chamber if you do not communicate outside of your own social circle or organization’s supporters.

Online petitions can be a great tool to demonstrate concerns over a particular issue, but do not expect a petition alone to bring about change. One of the best ways to use petitions is in conjunction with the media. If you have a petition that has reached a milestone (perhaps 10,000 signatures or more), you can promote it to press with a catchy headline “10,000 people rally against Amazon’s sale of cruel animal traps.” The resulting media coverage, rather than the petition itself, may gain more traction.

Petitions are also a great way to gather contact details of people who are interested in your work. If you host them on your own website, you can collect names and email addresses of people who are interested in getting involved in your campaign.

Remember that some petitions are location specific (your response will not be valid or registered if you are outside of a particular geographical range) and you must be sure your petition targets the person or agency who had the power to make the change. For example, do not target a petition towards a state agency if the issue is within the remit of the federal government (and vice versa).



## Pros

- Easy and quick to share information.
- Easy access to companies, individuals, celebrities (Twitter, Instagram, etc.).
- Allows people around the world to communicate easily.
- Petitions can collect thousands of signatures in a short time.
- Effective data collection for fundraising and future communications.

## Cons

- "Liking," "sharing," and "re-tweeting" might not have a practical impact on your campaign.
- Petitions (consider: location, target, sharing *instead of* signing, lack of impact).
- Fast moving, difficult to communicate complex or detailed information.
- Difficult to know what is accurate and what is not.
- Engaging with negative content increases its visibility.



## THE MEDIA

Traditional media is still a great way to gain support for your campaign and grow awareness around your issue. A story published in a national news outlet will not only get many eyes on it, but will gain the added weight of being covered by a reputable news outlet. A good way of working with national press is to build relationships with individual journalists and pitch your story to them. You are less likely to get national coverage if you simply send a press release.

Press releases do work well with local news outlets, online news, and radio. Online outlets in particular have no real limit to the number of stories they can publish and so a well-written press release may simply be republished with little to no edition. Television slots can be beneficial to your campaign but opportunities can be hard to come by.

Remember, if you are doing radio or television, ensure that your spokesperson really knows their subject and is confident talking publicly. Practice before the interview with the kinds of questions you think will come up.

In interviews, if you feel nervous, take deep breaths and a sip of water. Do not be tempted to fill silences with chatter or filler words like “ummmm”, “ermmm,” etc. Take a moment to think about your answer before beginning to speak. The audience will not notice a short pause. Remember, you know your subject better than anyone else does and no one is trying to catch you out. Try to enjoy it!

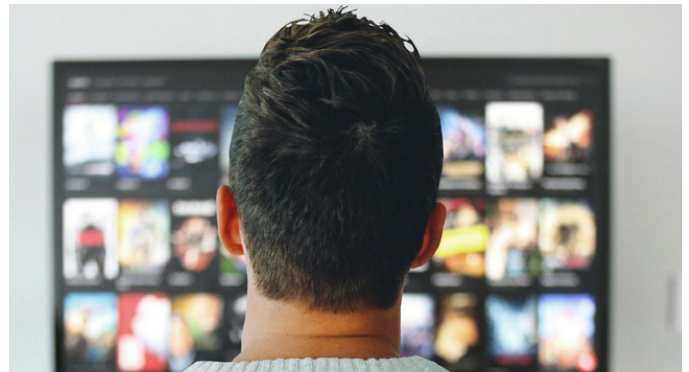
Read our template press release in our Activist Toolkit for tips.





## Types of Traditional Media Include...

- National print media
- Local print media
- Radio (local and national)
- Television (local and national)



## Key Elements of a Press Release

- Catchy headline
- Who, what, where, when, why in the first paragraph.
- Increasing amounts of information and detail in later paragraphs.
- Concise quotes (they will be edited down).
- Links for further reading or more information.
- Contact information.





## GOVERNMENT LOBBYING

Government lobbying is a skill and a profession for which people study and train for many years to master. However, everyone can participate in the democratic process in a meaningful way by engaging with their elected representatives.

This may include writing to your elected representative to ask them to sponsor, vote on, or otherwise take action on a piece of draft legislation. Even if there is no legislation in the pipeline, contacting your representative to share concerns about an issue close to your heart is a valuable action to take.

Organizing or participating in lobby days can be a way to mobilize groups of people on a specific issue, or draft bill. You will need to set up meetings in advance of your lobbying day (these meetings may be organized already if another organization is leading the day). Be sure to have a script or talking points prepared as you will likely have a short window of time to get your point across. It is always a good idea to have information to leave with the representative's office so that they can review the material at a later date. Remember to get a contact name and phone number or email address and follow up after the meeting to see if they have any questions.

Townhalls are another way to gain access to your representative and ask questions. Find out when your rep is doing a local townhall and prepare a question or comment in advance.



In addition to lobbying days, building relationships with staffers in your representative's office is valuable. The staffers are the beating heart of the office and will know a lot of what is going on. They can also brief your rep on issues if you are unable to get a direct audience with them.

Finally, engaging in consultations on issues as they arise – particularly providing feedback on proposed bills in your area of interest – is a way to have your voice heard. You can also ask your supporters and colleagues to respond to add weight and more voices to your arguments.

### **Remember, when engaging with members of the government, you should...**

Decide whether you want to target local, state, or federal officials for your campaign.

Write to elected officials and agencies to support an issue or to sponsor a bill.

Decide where and how to meet with officials. Two common venues for engagement are lobbying days and townhalls.

You can also meet with staffers, who play an important role in the running of elected officials' offices.

You can also engage in public and closed consultations.



## PROTESTS AND EVENTS

Check what laws, rules, and regulations apply in your local area. Different cities, counties, or states will govern demonstrations differently. Be informed.

Promote your demonstration on social media, with other groups, and among other networks available to you. Ask people to let you know if they plan to attend so you can get an idea of how many people are coming. Make sure that people planning to attend are given a reliable contact number for the day.

Ensure that everyone who is taking part in the demonstration is aware of any local rules and regulations, and of their own rights. Most demonstrations are safe for everyone involved but you need to know what to do if things go wrong. The priority at any demonstration is everyone's safety.

Make sure you have eye catching banners and posters so that people driving or walking past know why you are there. You can ask people to bring their own, or you can make them yourself and provide them to participants. Have flyers to hand out to passers-by who want to find out more.

Invite local press and send out a press release. Elect a spokesperson for any press inquiries but be aware that, if the press come, they might interview anyone in attendance. Elect someone to take photographs for you to share on your website, social media, and other platforms. Send the photos, and a press release about the demonstration after the event to local press. This gives you a second chance to get coverage.

Remember: even if your demonstration is small, you are still reaching people with your message!



## EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS

Producing educational resources can be a great way of spreading your message. Whether you are creating flyers to hand out during demonstrations, developing guides like the one you are reading right now, or planning a comprehensive schools' program, you will want to consider a number of points:

- Ensure that you have done your research and that your information is accurate.
- Ensure that you know your audience and write and present your work in a way that will be understood. This is particularly important if you want your resources to be used in schools. They will need to fit into particular curriculum parameters and must be designed and written in such a way that fits.
- Think about distribution. How are you going to promote and distribute your resources?
- Think about format. Printing is expensive so digital resources might be the best option for your campaign. With that in mind, will you charge for access to your resources (perhaps to cover printing costs) or will they be free of charge?
- Ensure that you update your resources so that they remain relevant.
- Ensure that your resources are as accessible as possible. If you can produce them in different formats (written, audio, video) then it will allow more people to put them to good use.



## EXPERT OPINION AND CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

In the age of Instagram and Twitter, we have the ability to follow and access the views and opinions of people in the public eye – whether celebrities or experts in their field. Public support from high profile people for your campaign may give it an important boost and allow you to reach an audience that you might otherwise not have access to.

Using celebrities and experts to help spread your message has great benefit in terms of getting lots of eyes on your work but be sure to do your research before you approach someone in the public eye to act as a spokesperson for your campaign and ensure that there is nothing concerning or problematic about their views that you would not like to be associated with (either in the area you are working on or others). For example, if your celebrity contact has a great track record on animals, but espouses problematic views about women, then you would likely not want to be associated with them in any way.

You also need to be prepared that someone who speaks for your campaign now may end up doing or saying something you are unhappy about in the future. In this case, you might want to issue a statement distancing your campaign from them and removing them from any promotional materials. You will find that your supporters will expect you to take action in the case that a celebrity (or anyone!) you are associated with causes harm. Be prepared to be held accountable.



## MEETINGS

While it may be natural to assume that if someone does something harmful, it is deliberate, and that a campaign against them/the issue is the way forward, remember that sometimes someone may be coming from a position of ignorance rather than lack of care or deliberate intent to cause harm.

An example is a company that used live tigers in an advertisement for their tech products. The tigers were used in a circus setting and were hired from a notorious circus trainer who had multiple animal welfare strikes against him. While it was tempting to launch a public campaign, our first step was to ask for a meeting with the CEO.

Within a few days, we received an email from the CEO himself asking for a meeting, which was set up for a few days later. At the meeting, we explained the problem and he promised to discontinue the ad with immediate effect. He was unaware of the issues and grateful that we raised them.

While many companies will not respond in such a positive way, reaching out in the first instance can be a swift and easy way to resolve a problem.





## TIME TO LAUNCH YOUR CAMPAIGN

- Choose which tools to use.
  - You don't have to use all of them.
  - There is no "right" or "wrong" as long as you move your issue forward.
- Finalize your strategy.
- Devise a timeline as far ahead as you can.
- Launch!
- Assess and update.





## WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Assessing the success of your campaign is important, not only to see how close you are to achieving your aim, but also as a way to ensure you are still on track if your campaign is a long one which might take years to win.

Setting milestones against which you can assess progress is important and will look different for each campaign you plan. Be sure to decide what your milestones are at the beginning of your campaign. These can act as steps for you to take as you work towards your long-term goals.

### **Banning Primates as Pets**

- 5,000 letters sent by constituents to representatives demanding change in law
- Unprecedented coverage of the issue in the press.
- A draft law passed out of committee.
- A bill on the issue voted on in both legislative chambers.
- Legislation enacted into law.

### **Vegetarian Diet Campaign**

- 10 stories in the press on the issue in the past six months.
- 500 new followers on social media platforms taking an interest in the issue.
- Testimonies from people who have moved to a vegetarian diet.



## THE END OF THE ROAD?

How do you know when you are done? Of course, if you reach your goal – be it a ban on primates as pets, convincing a retailer to go fur free, or getting vegan food options introduced into your college cafeteria – you can pop open the champagne and call it a win. However, what if you hit an obstacle that means you can't move forward? When is it time to call it quits?

There are many reasons that you might have to hit pause on a campaign. It may be that you simply don't have the time or resources to continue, it may be that there is a change in government that makes it unlikely to be successful at this time, it may be that there are disagreements in your group over approach or tactics. It may be that you are feeling burned out and you need to take a break to protect yourself. All of these and more are perfectly valid reasons to stop – whether for now or for good.

It is easy to feel that stopping is letting down the victims you are fighting for but remember that, if you have reached the point where you launched your campaign and put it out into the world, then you have very likely moved your important issue forward in some way. Even if your approach didn't work, this will allow others in the future to learn and try something else.

You may have built up a community around your campaign, you may have taken important steps forward. In short, you *have* made a difference with your work.

While we want to win every fight, remember that it is okay to take a step back and reassess what is right for the campaign and what is right for you.

Winning is great but knowing when to stop so that we are ready to fight another day when the time comes is vital.

