

Create Your Activism Plan

Activism Plan Builder Template

Vision

1. What are you passionate about? What do you care deeply about? What problems would you like to solve?

2. How do you want to change your community or society? What benefits would you like to bring to your community?

3. Weave these thoughts into a statement of your vision: specifically what would the world look like after the change you are seeking is achieved?

I see a [world, country, region, community] where...

Goals and Objectives

In this section of the activism plan you will outline your goals and objectives based on your vision. Consider the following criteria for reference.

Effective goals and objectives:

- Move from broad to specific
- Are outcome-oriented
- Are attainable
- Are measurable
- Identify target audiences
- Lead toward action

Consider these examples as you develop your goals and objectives around your vision:

Sample Vision: I see a country where there is more equality between men and women.

Goal (what short-term result do you want?): A first step to achieving that vision is to ensure that more women in society know of their existing rights. Hence, I will set a goal of helping at least 100 women in the next six months learn about their rights and what they can do to make changes to society.

Objective (what do you need to do to achieve the result?): To achieve that goal I will start a series of monthly workshops for women in my community that will educate them about their existing rights. We will have up to 25 women in each session.

Action Steps: Develop the curriculum, find teachers, find a venue, market the workshop, etc. (you will develop these later)

As you consider your goals and objectives, it may be useful to review your vision statement.

Analyze Your Issue

1. What specific need or problem do you want to address?

2. Why do you care about this problem? What are the consequences of not solving the problem?

3. Who is affected by this problem? How are they affected?

4. Is it possible to measure the extent of the problem? Have others measured it before, and if so, has it been documented?

5. Who are the specific people, groups, or institutions that play an active role in this issue?

6. What actions or behaviors could these different people or groups—including those affected by the problem—take to improve or worsen the situation?

7. How do you plan to solve this problem? What are some of the actions you can take to solve this problem? (Note: These specific solutions will form the basis for your goals and objectives)

Based on this review, outline an initial goal for your activism effort and two supporting objectives.

Goal statement:

Objective 1:

Objective 2:

Leadership

Examine Your Experience

In this section of the activism plan, you will examine your own experience in order to use past success as a guide for moving forward. As you consider your own experience, think about your vision – what are you passionate about? How can that help drive your leadership efforts?

Answer the following questions:

Describe a community project or activity you have undertaken:

Describe any stories of success you had in achieving change in your community:

Explore Your Leadership Traits

In this section of the activism plan, you will identify your specific leadership strengths and weaknesses. This information is essential to leading any effective activism effort.

Consider the following list of positive qualities of leadership:

- Communicative
- Passion-driven
- Courageous
- Self-sacrificing
- Inclusive
- Purposeful
- Persuasive
- Collaborative
- Ethical
- Self-confident
- Charismatic
- Decisive
- Determined

- Honest

First, choose two qualities from that list that you see most in yourself. Fill out this sentence:

I am choose quality: Give an example of how you have demonstrated that quality in your life.

For example:

- “Decisive”: I am decisive. My family often turns to me for decisions, because I always know the right answer while they often hesitate.
- “Collaborative”: I am collaborative. I like everyone to feel included when we make decisions at my job, so I spend a lot of time asking people for their opinions and views and finding out what matters to them.

Second, choose two qualities on that list that you see you lack, or that you would like to develop. Fill out this sentence:

I am not as choose quality as I would like to be: Give an example of how you would to improve this quality in your life.

For example:

- “Persuasive”: I am not as persuasive as I would like to be: I want to be more patient in explaining to people the reasons for my positions.
- “Self-Confident”: I am not as self-confident as I would like to be: I want to learn how to build confidence in my abilities.

Build Your Team

Once you know your own strengths and weaknesses, you’ll be able to start building your team. In this section of the activism plan, you will:

- Identify a circle of people
- Determine your trust relationship with them
- Discover their interests and passions
- Review the skill sets of potential volunteers, and

- Collect more people

Create a Circle of People

Make a list of 3- 15 people with whom you have shared values and beliefs— these are initial contacts you can reach out to when you are building a team or need support.

Remember to consider your circle in the context of your specific goal.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

Cultivate Trust, Understand the Passions of Others and Enlist Help

Look at the list of people you put together.

Select five core people and consider the following questions:

1. Why do people trust you? How have you earned their trust?
2. What can you do to improve or cultivate the trust of others?
3. Can you list one or two things they care deeply about? If not, how will you find out?
4. Consider what skills they bring. What skill sets do the people around you possess? Can you identify those who are good writers or enjoy public speaking? What other skill sets might be helpful when you're working to put together a successful team?

Person	Do they trust you?	What did you do to earn their trust? Can you maintain and build their trust in the future?	What is their passion? How can you find that out?	What skills do they offer?

What skills are you missing?

Collect More People

Identify where volunteers might be found to work on your activism effort. Who will you approach? How will you reach out to them? Are there any restrictions (either financial or otherwise) on your ability to reach out to these individuals? Identify at least five potential sources for volunteers, reasons why they should care and the specific tactics you will use to reach out to them.

Potential source for volunteers	Why should they care?	How will I reach them?

Civic Environment

Institutional Channels for Activism

In this section of the activism plan, you will identify the specific institutional channels you will target for your activism campaign.

Institutional channels of the state:

- **Legislative** – Work with lawmakers to reform or pass new laws, or become a legislator yourself.
- **Executive** – Work with those who implement the law (governmental institutes).
- **Judiciary** – Seek to have existing laws enforced by the court, or pursue new interpretations of laws.

Other institutional channels

- **Public events** – Engage in events like public protests, such as sit-ins, marches and boycotts, civil disobedience (refusal to obey unjust laws), and the like.
- **Political parties** – Form your own political party, join an existing party, or convince a party to add your issue to their political agenda.
- **Civil society** – Form your own organization, or ally with existing organizations, such as professional, community, or non-governmental organizations, or groups oriented towards social services, students, activism, or labor.
- **Media** – Access this channel through articles in newspapers, press conferences, and interviews with journalists.

A. Which institutional channels offer you the greatest chances of success in your activities, and why?

1.

Why?

2.

Why?

B. Which institutional channels offer you the least chance of success? Why?

1.

Why?

2.

Why?

Message and Audience

Draft Your Message

In this section of the activism plan builder, you will draft your message. To do so, you will:

- Draft your main message
- Identify your target audiences and your goals for those audiences
- Create targeted messages for each audience

First, review your goals and objectives.

As you draft the message, remember to consider the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of your message?
 - What do you want to achieve and why? Explain your goal.
 - How do you propose to achieve it? What action do you want your audience to take towards your goal?
2. Is your message effective?
 - Is it short?
 - Is it persuasive?
 - Is it credible?
 - Does it have a call to action?

Main message:

Identify and Understand Your Target Audiences

As you identify your target audiences, it may be helpful to review the institutional channels for civic activism that you identified earlier.

Create one list of potential audiences for your message. Who can help you achieve the goal you want to achieve? List them in the “primary audience” column. Remember that you are thinking of audiences for your goal, not necessarily your vision. Use the example below.

- **Vision:** I see a country where there is more equality between men and women.

- **Goal** (what short-term result do you want?): A first step to achieving that vision is to ensure that more women in society know of their existing rights. Hence, I will set a goal of helping at least 100 women in the next six months learn about their rights and what they can do to make changes to society.
- **Audiences** might include: the Ministry of Education to approve the course for credit; business people you would like to help fund the course; trainers and teachers; women you would like to have take the course, etc.
- **Objective** (what do you need to do to achieve the result?): To achieve that goal I will start a series of monthly workshops for women in my community that will educate them about their existing rights. We will have up to 25 women in each session.
- **Action Steps:** Develop the curriculum, find teachers, find a venue, market the workshop, etc. (you will develop these later)

Next, think about who influences that primary audience. For example, if one of your primary audiences is business people, the related secondary audience might be their customers. List those audiences in the corresponding “secondary audience” column.

Now, for each of these audiences, identify the following:

- What you want them to do or think?
- What motivates them? For example, if they are a primary audience what secondary audience motivates them? What are their values and concerns?
- Are they likely to support, oppose or be neutral? Or will their reactions be mixed?

Primary Audience Who are they?	What do you want them to do or think?	What motivates them?	Are they likely to support, oppose or be neutral?	Secondary Audience Who are they?	What do you want them to do or think?	What motivates them?	Are they likely to support, oppose or be neutral?

Target Your Messages

To get started, you'll want to revisit your main message, your list of target audiences and what you know about them and then address these questions for each audience. The chart you created in the last section will help:

1. What action do you want the audience to take?
2. Why would your audience want to take that action? (i.e., what are their interests and values)
3. What repercussions could the message have?
4. Who are your opponents?
5. What arguments will they use?
6. How will you neutralize their points within your own message? (Note: While you should anticipate the opposition's argument in your message, you should not frame your message as a response to that argument.)
7. How will your message be delivered? By whom, when and where? (Note: More details on message delivery are discussed in Section 7)

First, review your main message.

Now, insert information about targeted messages to your audience here:

Primary Audience	Desired Action or Position	What motivates them? (Values, concerns)	Targeted Message

Secondary Audience	Desired Action or Position	What motivates them? (Values, concerns)	Targeted Message

Outreach Activities

Coalition Map

In this section of the activism plan you will identify options for delivering messages, including:

- Working with other groups to deliver your message (coalition building)
- Determining communication methods

As you consider potential options for coalitions, keep in mind the following questions:

1. Are there any organizations with different political views from yours, but which nevertheless share your policy goal?
2. Are there industries or specific organizations that would or might benefit if your policy goal was achieved?

Coalition/Organization	Where do they stand? What is their philosophy?	How to motivate them to join your activism campaign	What resources or expertise would they bring to your efforts?

Communication Strategy

In this final section of the activism plan, you will outline specific delivery methods for your audiences. To do so, you will refer back to your Target Audience chart and insert information about delivery methods below.

Delivery methods could include:

- Social Networking Sites
- Earned Media (i.e., communications with reporters)
- Television and Radio Ads

- Letter-writing campaign
- Public Event / Conference
- One-on-one meetings
- Phone call campaign

Primary Audience	Delivery Method

Secondary Audience	Delivery Method