

DEFINING THE GOALS AND CRAFTING THE MESSAGE

Civil Society Laws: Experiences and Expertise

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The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

المركز الدولي لقانون المنظمات غير هادفة الربح

Strategic Communication

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Inform

Motivate

Persuade

Move to Action



Nine Questions

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1. What do we want?
2. Who can give it to us?
3. What do they need to hear?
4. Who do they need to hear it from?
5. How can we get them to hear it?
6. What do we have?
7. What do we need to develop?
8. How do we begin?
9. How do we tell if it's working?

What Do We Want?

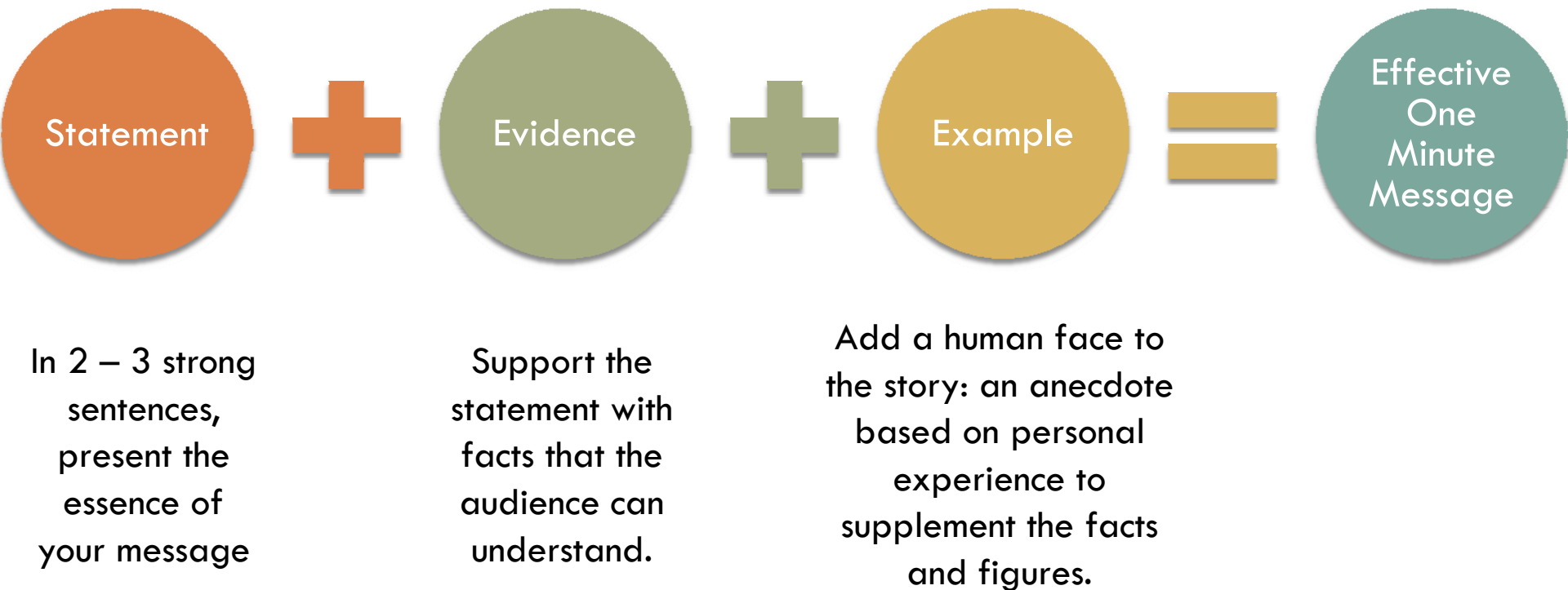
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- Start with a sense of your goals
- What are the long-term and short-term goals?
- Content goals versus process goals
(*“policy change”*) versus (*“building a community”*)

“The One Minute Message”

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- Can you explain what you want in the time it takes to ride an elevator?



Who Can Give It To Us?

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- Who are the people and institutions you need to move?
- Who has the formal legal authority?
- Who has the informal community authority?
- Who has the ability to influence formal and informal authorities?
(media, key constituents for and against)

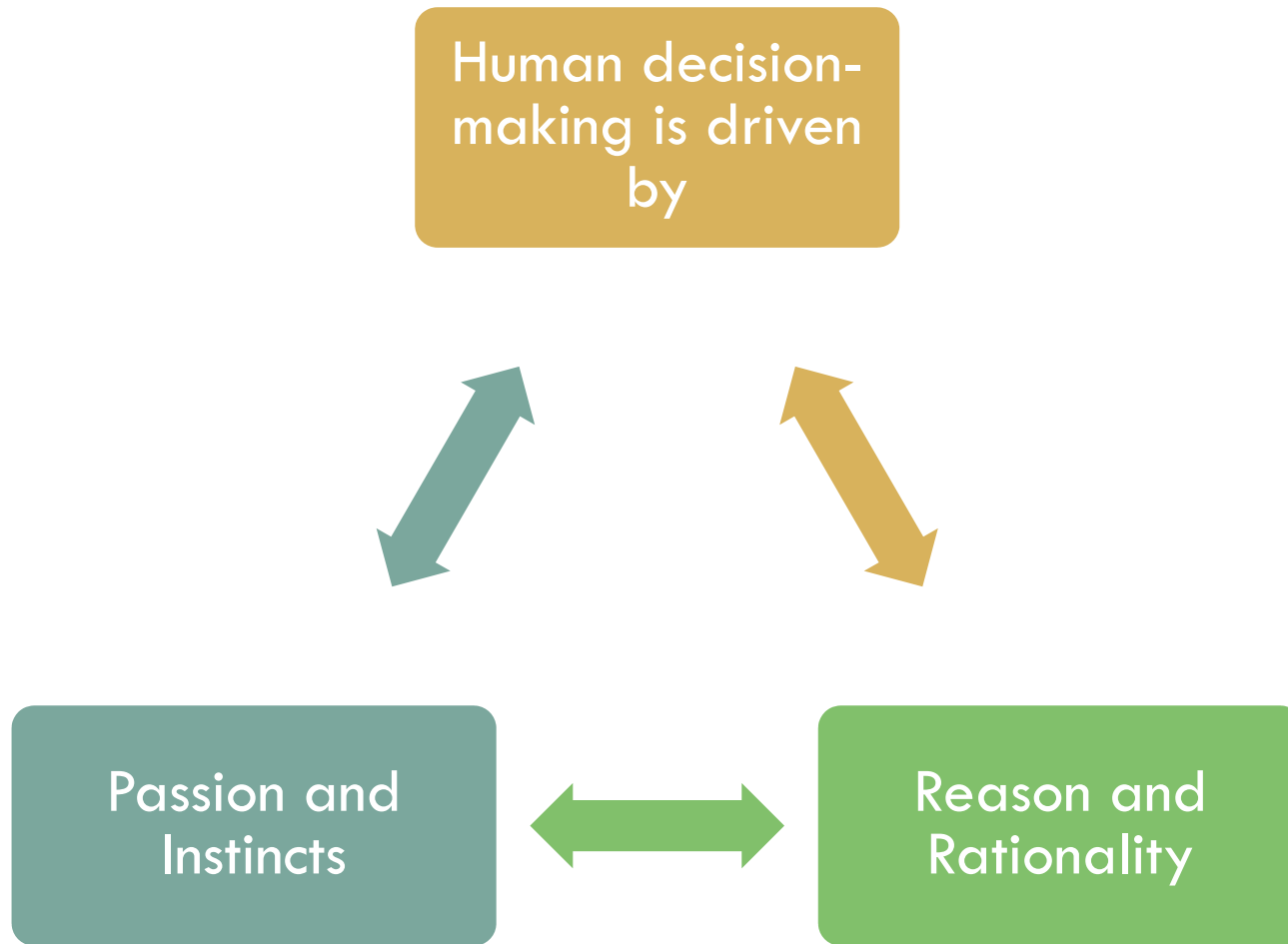
What Do They Need to Hear?

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- Although you may think your message is the same, the way it is crafted has to be tailored to what your audience is ready to hear.
- Always be truthful, but remember that how your message is delivered (and by who!) matters
- Most advocacy messages have two components:
 - ▣ An appeal to what is “right”
 - ▣ An appeal to the audience’s self-interest

What Do They Need To Hear?

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Who Do They Need To Hear It From?

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- The same message has a very different impact depending on who communicates it.
- Who are the most credible messengers for different audiences?
 - ▣ Experts
 - ▣ “Authentic voices” – those who speak from personal experience
 - ▣ Others
- What do we need to do engage these people?
- What can they be equipped with to increase their knowledge and their comfort as advocates?

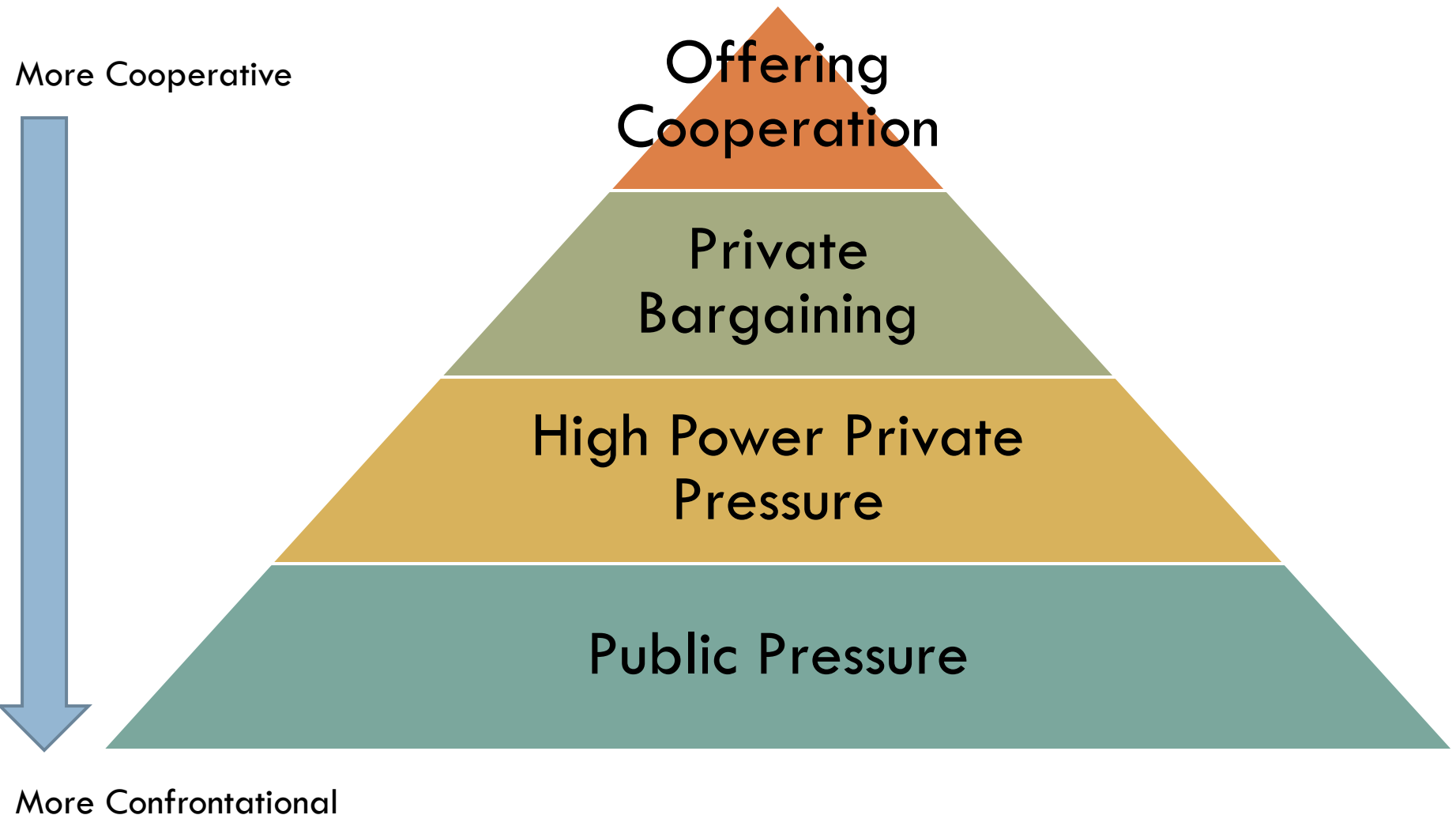
How Can We Get Them To Hear It?

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- Many ways to deliver a message!
 - ▣ Private audience
 - ▣ Media campaign
 - ▣ Public protests
 - ▣ International pressure
- The most effective means vary from situation to situation.
- Key is to evaluate and apply these means appropriately to create a winning mix.

How Can We Get Them To Hear It?

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What Do We Have?

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- Take stock of the advocacy resources that are already present:
 - ▣ Past advocacy work
 - ▣ Existing coalitions
 - ▣ Your staff and volunteer capacity
 - ▣ Your information and political “intelligence”
- Don’t start from scratch if you don’t have to – and you rarely have to!

What Do We Need To Develop?

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- After you have taken stock of what you have, identify what you still need that isn't there.
- What alliances need to be built?
- What are your capabilities in outreach and media?
- What kind of research and information collection do you need?

How Do We Begin?

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- Identify short term goals or projects that will bring the right people together, symbolize the larger work ahead and create something achievable
- Lay the groundwork for the next step – do not overestimate your capability
- Advocacy campaigns take lots of time

How Do We Tell If It's Working?

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- ❑ On any journey you want to check the course along the way
- ❑ Evaluate your strategy often by revisiting each of the questions we have explored and asking whether or not they are working?
- ❑ You must be flexible enough to make corrections and changes during your campaign
- ❑ Discard the elements that are not working and add new and creative elements as necessary

Summary: Successful Advocacy

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1. Set up a clear and realistic goal
2. Identify who will be most hurt by the law - these are your allies and the core of the coalition, even if they are different from you.
3. Identify who has authority to achieve the goals (decision makers), i.e. adopt/change laws.
4. Identify who has influence over decision makers and can help achieve goals in other ways.
5. Set up an action plan

1. Set up a clear and realistic goal

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- Minimum - identify most harmful provisions
- Maximum - avoid adoption of the law
- Short term and long term goals
- Other goals: dismissing government official, preventing and stopping bad implementation practices, etc.

2. Identify who will be most hurt by the law

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- These are your allies and the core of the coalition, even if they are different from you.
- Find them and explain the consequences of the law.
- Sometimes, the same law might have different effect on different NGOs. Even if your concerns with the law are different, it is important to mobilize other NGOs who might have these other concerns.
- The law might hurt not only NGOs, but businesses, government bodies and people.

3. Identify who has authority to achieve the goals (decision makers)

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- No legislation can be changed without the parliament and/or government
- Learn about the government's agenda: why it proposes the law, what problems it is trying to address (declaratory and real)
- Learn about related governments' agendas.
- Identify government bodies and officials who are decision-makers.
- Identify the specific government body and the official(s) in charge and learn everything you can about them.
- Sometimes you can identify unexpected allies within government and parliament if you manage to match their interests and needs with your agenda.

4. Identify who has influence over decision makers

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- Business?
- International organizations and foreign governments?
- GONGOs, some NGOs?
- Mass media?
- Think how can you engage any of them to help

5. Set up an action plan

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- Find the text of the law
- Try to make sure that you can follow changes to the draft
- Learn about the legislative process and timing and plan your campaign accordingly
- Power is not what you have but what your opponent thinks you have
- Do not fight institutions, fight people
- Be creative; whenever possible, go outside the experience of your opponent

Interactive Exercise

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- With the time we have remaining, let's practice identifying potential coalition members for NGO law reform in Egypt.
 - ▣ Who will be our potential allies?
 - ▣ Who will be opposed?
 - ▣ Who has authority, and who has influence over decision makers?