

# Good Publicity

## A Basic Guide

To create the big changes necessary to avert climate chaos we need to involve lots and lots of people in taking action both in their personal life and in their communities. How do we best get our message across to them? There are lots of options, but whatever you do, don't just rush into the first thing that springs to mind. Think about what's most effective for your campaign.

### Good publicity helps you:

- ✓ to spread information
- ✓ to get more people involved
- ✓ to increase pressure
- ✓ to be more effective

## 1. What are your key messages?

As campaigners we tend to overwhelm people with information – issues are complex and there is so much we care about. **But:** people are bombarded with lots of messages every day. To get across we need to focus on a few simple and clear things that will stick in people's minds.

You need to be clear about the aims of your campaign. What are the three most important things to get across to people? These are your key messages. Write them down in a couple of short, clear sentences and focus on them in the publicity. You may need to reword them depending on who you are talking to.

## 2. Who's your target audience?

People adopt different roles at different times throughout their week: employee at an oil company, parent, shopper, car driver, walker, tax payer. The same person will be receptive to different messages at different times.

Think about who you need to talk at what time to

### Checklist

- What do you want to get across?
- Who do you need to talk to?
- What do you want people to do?
- What's the best way of telling them?
- Do we have the time, skills and resources to do this?

achieve your aims. Put yourself in people's shoes. What is it they will care about? What will interest them? Look for a way into a conversation.

Targetting people with **messages and information relevant to them** will be very effective.

Publicity is about getting people on board and on your side. Rants and diatribes can be satisfying but are unlikely to achieve your aim. Win people over. Be creative and welcoming. If you are confronting people with the consequences of their actions, criticise their behaviour rather than the individual person. Acknowledge people's ability to change and give people options of what they can do to help.

Think about how you come across: is wearing that favourite "car drivers are scum" t-shirt really going to encourage car drivers to listen to your argument?

## 3. What do you want people to do?

All your communications should contain a **clear call to action** and give people concrete things to do, whether that's joining your group, cutting car use, coming to see a film, boycotting a product, writing a letter, growing their own vegetables.

Always supply **your contact details** so that people can find out more or get involved in your group. Having sources of further information ready is a good idea too – for example you could include web addresses on leaflets, posters and newsletters.

## 4. What's the best way of reaching people?

OK, so you've worked out your basic message and who you are targeting. Now it's time to decide the best way of getting your message across to them. Remember you want to **get people on your side**, so make it easy for your audience to listen to you.

Don't expect people to come to you for information – go to them. Use venues, language and styles that your particular audience will be **comfortable** with.

Think about the best way to **catch people's attention**. When talking to teenagers think

stickers, flyposting, gigs, skate festival. Business people may prefer to attend a talk by an expert at the town hall. Press like photos of stunts with kids and pensioners in it. Jo Public and local councillors are usually more comfortable at a panel discussion on neutral ground rather than graffiti on a wall.

Consider what **time and resources** you want to spend on publicity. What skills do you have in the group and what do you enjoy doing?

### Costing the Earth? Good publicity doesn't have to...

- How many leaflets and posters do you really need? People often end up with stacks and stacks of out-of-date stuff under their beds.
- Use recycled paper, don't use glossy ink and get them printed with vegetable ink. Check out green printers such as Footprint in Leeds or Green Print in Oxford.
- Are there more effective ways of going public than using paper? Can you use the web and email lists?
- Get existing newsletters and publications to run stories about your campaign and advertise your events.
- Make banners and costumes from old sheets, materials from charity shops, plastic rubbish, leftover paint.
- Share materials and equipment with other groups. Make things that last and that can be reused.

## 5. Top ideas for effective publicity:

**Posters** – put up in local shops, community centres, GP's surgeries, schools, pubs.

**Leaflets** – for handing out in town, sticking through letter boxes, on stalls, giving to your friends.

**Street stalls and stalls at events** – great for direct contact with people, getting new people involved and fundraising.

**Publicity stunts** eg street theatre to attract attention or creating photos to get into the newspapers.

**Banners at stalls and events** – colourful well made banners catch attention and really get the message across.

**Stickers/badges** – with your message or contact details.

**Word of mouth – very effective!**

**Get into the press** - newspapers, radio and tv.

**Local/national newsletter** - keep your ever-growing network of supporters updated.

**Subvertising billboards** – altering wording/images to subvert advertising messages.

**Events - talks, films, workshops** are great for giving people the chance to check you out without committing to anything and for getting people to think about stuff.

**Benefit gigs** – raise cash. Don't forget to have a stall and get the bands to talk about the issue.

**Displays** – in the library,

schools, community centres.

**Websites** – very important nowadays. A cheap way of giving people lots of information.

**Email lists** – to stay in touch with supporters.

**Blogs** – here you can have your daily rant and people might just read it.

**Rallies, demos, vigils** – visible presence on the streets. Hand out leaflets, talk to passers-by, have lots of banners and get your story into the media.

**Letters to the editor** – especially effective in your local rag as that's the only bit most people read.

**Endless other possibilities** - postcards, t-shirts, window posters, mugs.

**For more briefings and training workshops:**  
[www.seedsforchange.org.uk](http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk)