



Five Skills Every Activist Should Have

Acquire these skills to become an effective activist



1. Run a Campaign



Campaigns are the bread and butter of politics. They are made up of many components that an activist should thoroughly understand.

1. Block walking/phone banking

- a. This is the backbone of campaigns. Having “boots on the ground” cannot be replaced by any amount of advertising in other areas. Walking neighborhoods, calling voters and using the collected data during the election season are one of the most powerful tools in politics. Campaigns and movements with a well-oiled precinct plan win more times than they lose.

2. Social media activism

- a. In today’s age social media has become a large platform for communication. With a careful strategy an activist can use this platform to effectively reach a host of people with their message. Think of Facebook as a meeting place and an exchange of ideas and Twitter as a way to spread a message like wildfire. The more followers you have, the further your message goes. You should be careful though, one mistake can be shared with the world in a matter of seconds and do irreplaceable damage.

3. Fundraising

- a. Learning how to ask people for money can be uncomfortable. However, without sufficient financing even the best-run campaigns are limited. If people believe in your cause then they will be open to giving you money. Think of fundraising as giving a donor a vision and then asking them to be a part of it.

4. Hiring/managing staff

- a. A candidate's staff plays a critical role in the success of the campaign. Personnel is policy. Take time during the hiring process.

5. Speech writing

- a. Understanding the basics of a good speech should be second nature to an activist. Not only is it important to create them for yourself or a candidate but also to interpret other candidate's speeches.

6. Media interaction

- a. This is where you have a chance to shine...or flop completely. Become familiar with how, when, and where to interact with the media and you can control the outcome.

2. Hold Elected Officials Accountable



Holding elected officials accountable once they take office is a huge part of being a responsible activist. Officials need to be reminded who elected them and whose voice they represent. Explore these ways to keep officials accountable.

1. Make your voice heard

- a. Build a relationship with your representative the way you would anyone else. Call them, email them, visit their office and share your beliefs and thoughts with them. Elected officials have to know that you are paying attention to their votes and actions.

2. Put them on the spot

- a. Ask questions! Whether publicly or privately ask them about where they stand on issues and how they plan to vote.

3. When all else fails, bring the heat!

- a. If your representative decides to go against the will of their constituents then pressure them into doing the right thing by getting all their constituents to contact them. If that fails then it is time to find someone to run against them in the next election.

3. Lock Down Your Precinct



Controlling your precinct is an often-overlooked aspect of politics. The precinct forms the building block of districts and counties. If you control the precincts, you control the district. Because of their relative small size you can easily grab a few friends and take it over. Here are a few things to do to accomplish this.

1. Become a Precinct Captain

- a. The most important but often overlooked office inside of party politics. If you control the precincts then you hold the power. With a solid plan of action, you can take over your precinct in a matter of a few months.

2. Find block captains

- a. These people will help you control your precinct. They live across the street from you and are usually happy to volunteer their time.

3. Keep the polls safe

- a. To keep illegal activities from happening (yes, they do happen) it is crucial to learn how to work the polls. There are numerous laws dictating what can and cannot go on at polling locations-know these laws and follow them. The commitment is minimal but the reward is huge.

4. Network



Networking is the name of the game. Without an effective network strategy you won't go far. A good activist participates in each of these components.

1. They go to meetings

- a. There is no better way to meet new people that share your beliefs than to attend meetings. It is the best use of your time for making new connections and building your network. Just remember that meetings should be the starting point for action that impacts the world around you.

2. They host meetings

- a. Want to go even further? Host your own meeting. Invite friends and neighbors over to learn about an issue or get hands on training. Keep it fun, but have a simple plan of action for every meeting you host. Meetings should not be an end unto themselves; every meeting should end with a plan of action.

3. They understand that relationships are the key to networking

- a. Most importantly, a good activist understands that the purpose behind networking is not to "use" people but to build lasting relationships.

5. Understand Policy



Having a clear understanding of policy is critical to an activist. Without understanding bills and rules of congress it is nearly impossible to know how your elected official is really doing. There are several facets of policy that an activist needs to know.

1. How to read a bill (and make sense of it)

- a. Bills can seem complicated. Understanding the logic and impact behind them is absolutely critical. Great resources for policy are ConservativeReview.com and HeritageAction.com.

2. The Legislative Process (and why it matters)

- a. The process of how a bill becomes a law plays a huge role in how legislatures make decisions. Even a simple understanding of this process can help you decipher what's really going on.

3. So what? (How does policy affect YOU?)

- a. Policy impacts you in many different ways. Often, people overlook it because it is confusing or does not *directly* affect them. Making the effort to understand how policy effects you is critical.