

Tips on messaging, media and strategy in planning effective campaigns

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland January 2012

1. Don't assume people know what you are talking aboutⁱ
2. Be systematic – plan
3. Vision is important as is strategising how to get there
4. Problem solving and creative thinking is critical
5. Work for media coverage i.e. develop relationships with journalists/contacts
6. Tell a story - document/communicate the situation not as a policy issue but as a story
7. Keep it short – sentences, statements, releases, documents
8. Language must be clear and straightforward
9. Editing is essential in production of videos/film clips. Focus on the message, atmosphere, tone and audience. Requires time and input and can't be left to external producer
10. Don't overstate i.e. say what is happening and avoid exaggerating
11. Always prepare speakers i.e. notes, practice
12. Systematically map allies across range of stakeholders and don't exclude unlikely ones
13. All press/public statements need to be double checked
14. Be creative – use of film footage, snappy headings, pictures, documenting evidence i.e. undercover
15. Don't blur the lines between fact and opinion and avoid being too emotional
16. Back up facts with evidence/explanation
17. Be speedy with follow up and responding to a situation
18. Availability is key esp. if media spokesperson/leading on campaign i.e. don't switch off phone
19. Be ready to shift journalists line of inquiry/interest onto our priorities
20. Follow up and communicate with funders/VIPS/contributors– briefings, updates, new developments
21. Don't react too quickly – stop and plan even if only little time. Check facts first
22. Putting stuff in writing helps clarify and get to the point
23. Messages should be agreed and should be clear and practical
24. Don't react – get on offence. Be proactive
25. Be authentic
26. It's worth going the extra mile, seizing the opportunity and if necessary taking some risks
27. Take time to reflect and analyse post an event/action/interview
28. Need to be up to date with current affairs

ⁱ Thank you to Bill Abom for putting time into these top tips for MRCI