

Grassroots Advocacy 101

2012 New York Library Association Conference

Presented by:

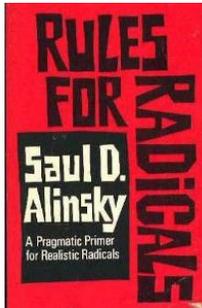
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Rules for Radicals | Saul D. Alinsky



RULE 1: “*Power is not only what you have, but what the enemy thinks you have.*” Power is derived from two main sources – money and people. “Have-Nots” must build power from flesh and blood.

RULE 2: “*Never go outside the expertise of your people.*” It results in confusion, fear and retreat. Feeling secure adds to the backbone of anyone.

RULE 3: “*Whenever possible, go outside the expertise of the enemy.*” Look for ways to increase insecurity, anxiety and uncertainty.

RULE 4: “*Make the enemy live up to its own book of rules.*” If the rule is that every letter gets a reply, send 30,000 letters. You can kill them with this because no one can possibly obey all of their own rules.

RULE 5: “*Ridicule is man’s most potent weapon.*” There is no defense. It’s irrational. It’s infuriating. It also works as a key pressure point to force the enemy into concessions.

RULE 6: “*A good tactic is one your people enjoy.*” They’ll keep doing it without urging and come back to do more. They’re doing their thing, and will even suggest better ones.

RULE 7: “*A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag.*” Don’t become old news.

RULE 8: “*Keep the pressure on. Never let up.*” Keep trying new things to keep the opposition off balance. As the opposition masters one approach, hit them from the flank with something new.

RULE 9: “*The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself.*” Imagination and ego can dream up many more consequences than any activist.

RULE 10: “*If you push a negative hard enough, it will push through and become a positive.*” Violence from the other side can win the public to your side because the public sympathizes with the underdog.

RULE 11: “*The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative.*” Never let the enemy score points because you’re caught without a solution to the problem.

RULE 12: “*Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it.*” Cut off the support network and isolate the target from sympathy. Go after people and not institutions; people hurt faster than institutions.

Strategy



✓ **Targeting**

✓ **Timing**

✓ **Tactics**

Tactical Basics

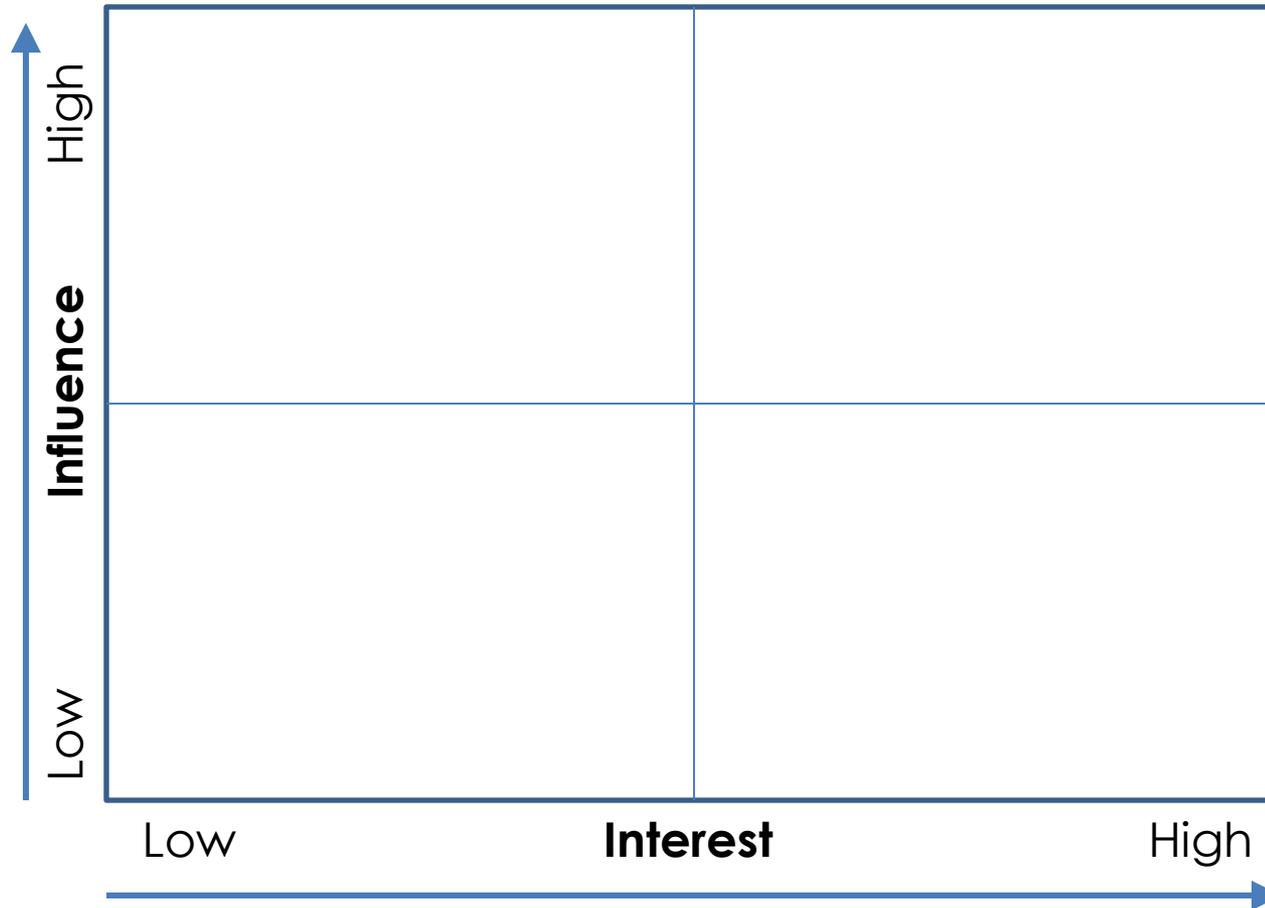
WHAT do we want to accomplish?

WHO will *assist* or *hinder* our effort?

WHEN do we make our push to best impact?

HOW are we going to change things?

Stakeholder Analysis



Core Values

✓ Access

✓ Democracy

✓ Literacy

✓ Community

✓ Intellectual

Freedom

✓ Stewardship

✓ Adaptability

Key Messages

“Libraries Are Essential”

– Early Literacy & the Literacy Spectrum

- School Readiness
- Summer Reading
- Public Library as “School Library”

– Internet Access

- Job seeking
- E-government

– Cost Efficient

- Systems → libraries → public
- Libraries → public

Crafting Your Message

from the American Library Association's Advocacy University

Step 1: What is the main thing you want to say? (in 15 words or less)

Step 2: What statistics and anecdotes would support this point?

Statistics	Anecdotes

Step 3: Why is this important?

Step 4: What can the listener do to help?

What's Effective?

- ✓ *[Good]* Word-of-Mouth
- ✓ Positivity & Hope
- ✓ Clear Up Myths
- ✓ Be Relevant & Reasonable
- ✓ **Be Confident**



To Do List

- Step up. Speak Up.**
- Foster **community partnerships**
- Seek input, act on community values**
- Don't cave in** to the fear mongers
- Beware the “poverty mentality”; **respect your taxpayers**
- Get the word out about the good you do**
- Make **literacy**, of all types, central to your organization
- Be the change**



☆ Rally in a Box ☆

We challenge everyone everywhere to empower themselves and hold their own library rally. Don't feel intimidated! It doesn't have to be huge. If one person stops and asks what's going on, that is a success! If ten people stop, then you have scored a victory and made an impact in the community that you serve.

5 Rules 5 Tools 5 Talking Points 5 Activities 5 Point Checklist

5 Rules

- No trashing the mayor (we may all want to, but it doesn't do us any good)
- No the library director (again, not gonna help)
- Don't obstruct anything (roads, entry to library, etc.)
- Don't work the rally on work time (ask your individual manager for suggestions)
- Bust your ass: either do the work and hit it hard, or step aside

5 Tools

- Facebook for communications
- Flyers to spread the word
- Talking points to keep you focused
- Checklist so you don't forget anything
- Camera so you can share it

5 Talking Points

- Libraries help small businesses and job-seekers
- Libraries are the community cultural storehouse
- Libraries are cost effective and save community household's savings
- Libraries help kids and teens
- Libraries are democratic, everyone benefits from them

5 Activities

- **Clasping hands around the library:** Get the whole crowd into it! Find anyone you can to help- HUG your library and keep it safe! Do it even if you don't have enough to surround it!
- **Children's rally:** Let the little ones take charge! Make it a munchkin rally with tiny signs, and get the bigger kids to be your readers.
- **Mini Read-In:** Put up a sign, open a book, start reading, invite your friends, repeat! We did ours for 24 hours but you can do an hour, two, four, or more.
- **Mini-March:** March around the exterior of the library - not just once, but for a set amount of time. Patrol the perimeter, be loud, be proud, hold up your signs and protect your library like soldiers on watch!
- **Library Art Quilt:** Create and display a children's art "quilt" of paper art stapled together. Get all the kids to create art in support of the library for a few days. Staple them all together and see (and photograph) how big a space it fills! Bring it outside and show the world how much you love your library!

5-Point Checklist

- **Get the OK:** Permission from library branch manager and if necessary, the library's government affairs office
- **Tell The World!:** Make flyers & post on bulletin boards and around neighborhood
- **Include your allies:** Notify Friends group & any potential supporting organizations or groups in the neighborhood (local schools, etc)
- **Don't overlook the obvious:** TELL YOUR CUSTOMERS
- **Prep:** Have all of your supplies ready to go - petitions, camera, sunscreen (you don't want Lauren's trucker tan!), signs, t-shirts, buttons, talking points, paper megaphone (rolled up card stock), courage, friends ♥

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