

Power mapping

Objectives:

- To help participants consider the social and political context within which they are developing strategy.
- To creatively consider allies, opponents, targets and constituents prior to embarking on a campaign.
- To serve as a reminder and framework for subsequently revising strategy.

Time: 1 hour – 2 hours.

How it's done:

In pairs/threes:

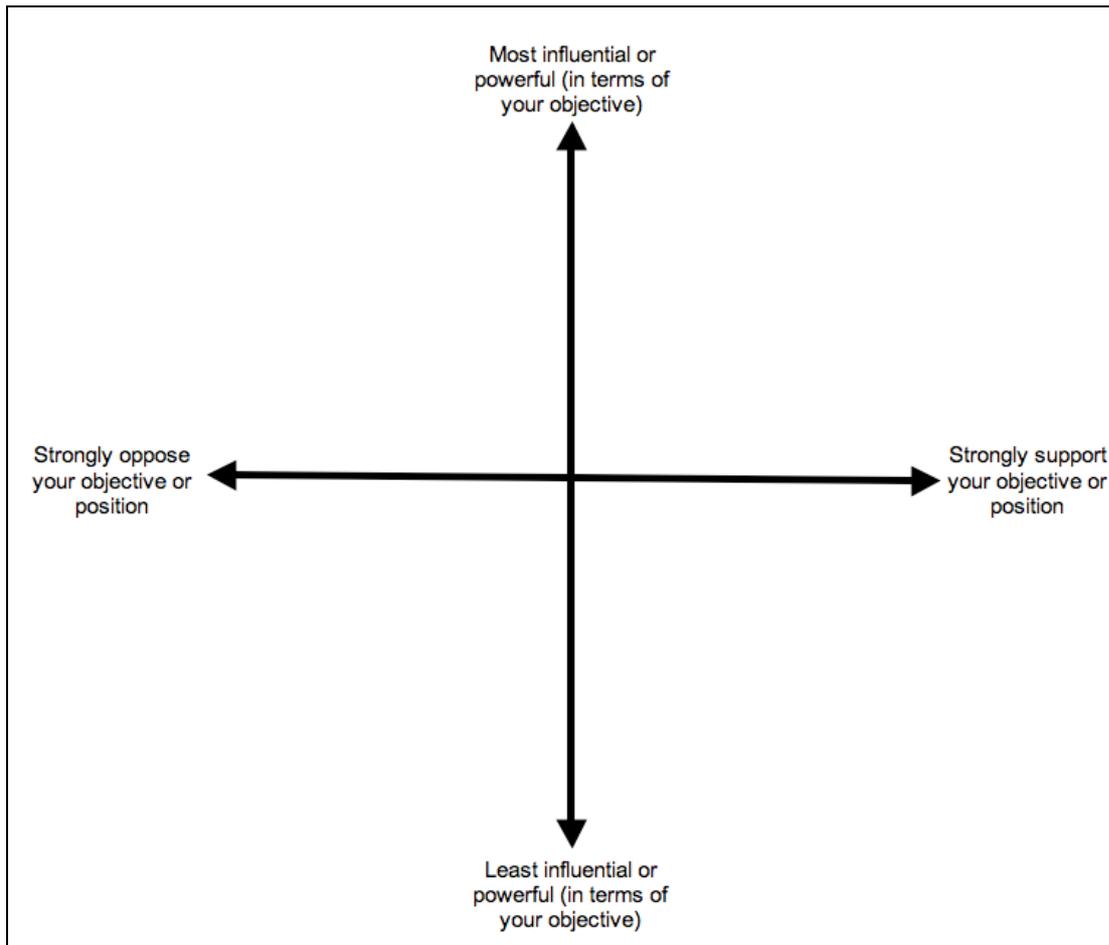
1. Think of a campaign you are involved with (or might become involved with).
What is it you are trying to achieve with this campaign?
2. Briefly describe your campaigns to each other.
3. Select one campaign for this exercise.

Consider: **“What is the main outcome your campaign hopes to achieve?”** Define this outcome in terms of a realistic and achievable objective (eg. recycling bins in every classroom or a doubling council's budget for native tree planting).

4. With this outcome in mind, write on the cards provided the names of organisations and people with whom you might need to engage in order to achieve this outcome. Start with yourself and the main decision-maker/s. You might like to include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your own group • other community groups - consumer, residents, environment, etc • local government - which officers? • state government - which departments or ministers? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • churches • federal government - which departments or ministers? • local, regional and national media • property/ real estate developers • local businesses • experts • professionals (eg teachers, police) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • particular sectors of the community • indigenous people • youth, unemployed, • men/women, the aged • industry |
|--|--|---|

Each group needs a blank power map on butchers paper. This is a simple matrix with a horizontal axis and vertical axis. The vertical axis indicates the level of influence or power each person or organisation has to give your group what you are asking for. The top of this axis is where you would place people or organisations that have most power or influence. The horizontal axis indicates whether people support your group's specific objectives or if they are opposed to these objectives. At the left end of this spectrum are people who are most opposed to your desired changes or objectives. At the right end are people who support your objectives most strongly.



5. Place the card with the name of your organisation on the power map.
6. Identify the organisation or individual holding the most power in terms of delivering your desired outcome. Place this card on the power map, leaving some distance between the two cards.
7. Place each card in turn on the power map. As you place them down, say something about how they are related to your organisation, to the main power-holder and to each other. How much influence do they hold? Do they cooperate with each other or are they in conflict? Do you presently have a relationship with these people? Are they likely to agree with your position?
 - Position the cards according to the relationships that exist between them.
 - Consider the relative power of the stakeholders in your campaign. Who is closest to the key decision makers? Move them around. Spend at least five minutes until the map feels right.
 - Your partner/s in this exercise can help clarify power relationships by questioning you as you go along.
8. When your map is complete, identify the two or three locations within the map where you feel your campaign might effect the greatest influence. Are there people or organisations who hold power and who you might successfully influence?
9. Report back, discussion.

Here's a variation. Create the grid with masking tape on the floor. Invite participants to brainstorm the agents involved and place themselves on the grid to represent these individuals or organisations. Discuss and agree your campaign can do to shift these agents. To get the most from the exercise, participants need to do some research first

Where tool comes from:

James Whelan <http://www.thechangeagency.org>