

APPENDIX

FREEDOMWORKS GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM TOOLKIT

CONTENTS

1	The Chapter Concept	183
2	Networking and Building Coalitions	188
3	How to Organize a Tea Party Protest	190
4	Traditional Media	193
5	Social Media	200
6	Lobbying Elected Officials	210
7	Recruiting	228
8	Retaining Activists	236
9	Fund-raising	240

MANY OF YOU MAY BE new to the political process. You have probably never considered yourself to be a community organizer. But in the last couple of years,



Scenes from the September 12, 2009, March on Washington. *Photos by Michael Beck*

thousands of Americans have become true leaders in their communities, organizing protests and town hall meetings, lobbying their state and federal legislators, and leading get-out-the-vote efforts for limited-government candidates in elections.

No one is born an expert organizer, but we can all learn from one another by sharing best practices and pitfalls to avoid. In the next few pages you will learn the basics necessary to become an effective advocate for limited government. We will describe how to organize a protest, be effective in town hall meetings, interact with the media, utilize online tools, hold events, raise money, recruit members to your group, and other essential information.

Remember that we are following the tradition of the original American community organizers, the Sons of Liberty. These grassroots Americans helped lead a campaign to build public support for the American Revolution, and were the brains behind the original Boston Tea Party in December 1773. As they understood so well, it does not take a majority to prevail, but rather an



irate, tireless minority keen to set brush fires of freedom in the minds of men.

We hope that you will find this guide useful to you and your local group. There is also an online resource for those who want to learn more at www.freedomworks.org/manual.

I. THE CHAPTER CONCEPT

THE CHAPTER CONCEPT is designed to achieve the goal and mission of FreedomWorks: lower taxes, less government, and more freedom. Therefore, it is important that you know and use these methods when building your club.

The chapter concept allows activists to function in small groups so they can easily relate to one another. It promotes a sense of unity and motivates members to take action in the political system. We have state chapters, county chapters, and town chapters

all across the country. You can become a part of this network of activists by creating your own chapter and networking with others in your county and state.

ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT: BEN TESSLER

On April 15, 2009, Washington, D.C., real estate agent Ben Tessler attended his first Tea Party rally. “I was shocked to see nine or ten people I knew,” he recalled. “These are normal people who feel as anxious as I do for the country. All felt helpless and at the same time, all felt a great need to be there at that rally just to be doing something.”

Ben went home feeling revitalized. He forged deeper relationships with his friends he saw at the rally. He also began building a contact list and pushing the limited government and fiscal responsibility message whenever and however he could. Although it seemed like more and more people were picking up on the message, he wasn’t sure exactly how to bring things to the next level.

At a July 4 gathering, Ben met Brendan Steinhauser of Freedom-Works. “Brendan and I exchanged contact information and kept in touch. When I found out about the 9/12 march on Washington, I volunteered to do anything I could to help. I had to be involved and not let someone else fight my battle. There is nothing more important than fighting for family, country, and faith. They are all tied together.”

Fired up for the march, Ben went back to work on his e-mail list. He and his friends began to send out articles and video clips to those on their contact lists. As the messages were forwarded and became viral, Ben’s list continued to grow.

“Our local group positioned itself as a kind of a first responder,” he said. “We put ads in local papers, wrote letters to the editor, and tacked flyers on the community boards at coffee shops and pizza parlors. We put

signs on major streets and hung banners on overpasses and busy intersections.”

What began as an experiment for Ben had become a passion, consuming his time, and growing in directions he never imagined. “I could sense great momentum building up to the march. Citizens were waking up, feeling the same sense of urgency I felt. The mood was changing. There were more of us than anyone realized.”

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Mission Statement

Each chapter should have a clear mission statement consisting of one or two sentences that succinctly explain the explicit goals of the group and how they will be accomplished. The mission statement provides an important roadmap for sustained effectiveness months and years into the future. When issues arise, it’s often helpful to refer back to the mission statement to decide on a path to take.

A smoothly operating chapter has structure. Each chapter should have a chapter leader, communications director, legislative liaison, membership director, and social director. It is recommended that these positions be delegated to reliable individuals in each chapter. However, if the chapter is small, multiple duties can be delegated to a few individuals.

Chapter Leader

The volunteer chapter leader will be responsible for the operation and conduct of the chapter’s members. Fund-raising will also be the responsibility of the chapter leader. This person is the public face of

the organization and should possess excellent personal relationships, leadership, and organizational skills. Often this person is referred to as the chapter chairman or president of the chapter.

Communications Director

The press officer should be responsible for internal and external communications. Press releases, editorials, and letters to the editor are examples of external communications. E-mails and correspondences that remain in the chapter are considered internal communications. This person should maintain the chapter's Web site or blog. Also, the communications director should try to link the chapter's Web site with other local blogs and think of ways to increase traffic to the Web site or blog. This person would also manage the group's Twitter feed, Facebook outreach, Ning network community, and other online networks.

Legislative Liaison

The legislative liaison should have strong knowledge about the local, state, and national political environments and processes. It will be his or her job to keep track of legislative issues, provide updates to the group, build relationships with legislative champions, and set up activities like lobbying visits, phone call and e-mail campaigns, and other campaign activities. The legislative liaison should know what bills are being introduced, who the cosponsors are, and whether to support or oppose the bills. This chapter officer is critical when it comes to making an impact on the public policy process.

Membership Director

The membership director will maintain membership lists and ensure that all members are receiving the proper materials. Furthermore, the coordinator will work with our grassroots manager to access the FreedomWorks database for membership data. This chap-

ter officer is in charge of recruiting and retaining members for the local chapter. It is his or her job to look for opportunities to greatly expand the membership list through creative efforts and good old-fashioned peer-to-peer recruiting. It is important for a group to continuously grow over time in order for it to remain a political force in the community.

Social Director

The social director's job is to make sure that the chapter is having fun while getting work done. This person will plan events that build a sense of community in the group: think about things like movie nights, soirees, parties, and other fun social events. It's important that the members of the chapter enjoy what they are doing, as well as feel like they are making a real difference in the public policy debates.

RUNNING A CHAPTER MEETING

Once the chapter's leadership is in place and organized, the next step is to host a chapter meeting. Chapter meetings should be held on a regular basis. They should also inform and motivate members to take action. Chapter meetings should be simple, short, and informative.

The purpose of a chapter meeting is to make sure that everyone knows about upcoming events and campaigns. But meetings are also a great place to invite special speakers or to screen a film. Meetings should be held regularly so that it becomes a part of the members' ordinary lives. If there are times when the group cannot meet due to timing, weather, or other reasons, consider hosting a conference call for everyone. Many groups have used conference

calls to great effect, and you can feel free to utilize FreedomWorks' conference call system.

The success of a political event or meeting will hinge on the people within the organization planning the event. A dedicated core group of people is critical to the success of a meeting. These people are typically recruited through networking and from prior meetings, events, and projects. The best people are the ones who exhibit a strong desire to work to implement our ideas and policies. They will tend to be the true believers who are excited and impassioned by the opportunity to help advance our agenda.

—RICK REISS, TEMECULA, CALIFORNIA

Chapter meetings should typically last no longer than an hour or so. People lead busy lives and you don't want them to stop paying attention and leave early. Cover as much as you can and then leave them wanting more from the next meeting. Be sure to have someone run the meeting who is good at moving things forward. Try to save most of the debating and rhetorical questions for the very end of the meeting. You need to stay focused and get things done before you can open the floor up to banter, which is something that will happen. Manage your meeting effectively and stick to your schedule. Your members will thank you for it.

2. NETWORKING AND BUILDING COALITIONS

IF YOUR CHAPTER IS going to succeed, networking must be practiced at the local and state levels. Networking with other organi-

zations allows your chapter to focus on what it does best, which is to mobilize citizens to take action in the political process. Other organizations will be able to assist you by providing information, resources, and people who may become members of your group.

Building coalitions is essential to leading a successful chapter. As a chapter leader you can become a member of other groups that have similar values. Coalition-building provides another means of recruiting people to your group and spreading the message in your local community. One trend that is gaining momentum is the creation of federations of limited government groups at the state level. For example, local groups have opened up the lines of communication with one another, and local leaders talk regularly on conference calls and via Google groups to stay in touch about projects everyone is working on. This model has worked with great success in many places and should be replicated around the country. No one person or group needs to be in charge. The purpose of the federation is merely to keep the lines of communication open and to allow for greater cooperation between like-minded groups.

While I have e-mail contact with most of the Tea Party leadership throughout the Bay Area, each group is wholly autonomous. In areas where there is great distance this makes sense, but in smaller geographic clusters, coalitions and larger protests should at least be one more tool in the Tea Party toolbox. Larger protests offer many advantages that scattered, smaller, local rallies cannot: precious resources can be streamlined, larger numbers in one place attract concentrated media attention, and the message of the day can be delivered with greater effectiveness. This kind

of coalition should never take away from local groups acting autonomously in their own best interests, but occasional collaboration would indeed add impact. Our group has undertaken several novel steps in recent months to foster cooperation and increase exposure among Bay Area conservatives, groups, and candidates.

—SALLY ZELIKOVSKY, SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA

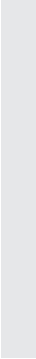
When building coalitions remember that all groups can keep their own identities and leadership while at the same time staying in touch with the other groups around the state. There should ideally be a meeting in every county in America where limited government activists can come together to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and network with one another. The location of these coalition meetings could change from town to town within each county, to make sure that every group has a chance to host one.

3. HOW TO ORGANIZE A TEA PARTY PROTEST

PICK A LOCATION, DATE, AND TIME IN YOUR TOWN.

We suggest Main Street at an intersection with lots of traffic.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, COWORKERS, AND everyone else you know about the protest. Build an RSVP e-mail list so that you can provide quick updates if something changes. You should also create a Facebook group so that the group members can communicate with one another.



MAKE FIVE TO TEN SIGNS WITH LEGIBLE SLOGANS that send a clear message to the public and the media. Write in big letters.

CALL YOUR LOCAL TALK-RADIO HOSTS AND ASK them to announce the location, date, and time on the air for a few days leading up to the protest. Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper announcing the protest. E-mail the bloggers in your area and ask them to post a notice about the protest.

WRITE A PRESS RELEASE AND E-MAIL, MAIL, AND fax copies to the local TV stations, radio stations, bloggers, and newspapers. Call the reporters who cover local events or politics and leave messages on their voice mail.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR PROTEST, SHOW UP WITH your group; be loud, visible, and happy; and engage the public. Wave your signs, make lots of noise, and move around to get attention. If reporters interview you, give them some good sound bites for their stories. Stay on message and keep your answers short and coherent.

BRING SIGN-IN SHEETS TO CAPTURE THE NAMES, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of those who attend the protest and/or say that they support what you are doing. You will then have a big list of people who can plan the next, much bigger and louder event. Also, bring handouts with one page of quick facts about why you are protesting in the first place.

ADD YOUR PHOTOS, VIDEOS, AND AN AFTER-ACTION report to your Facebook group, and send this material to the bloggers and reporters whom you originally contacted. Ask them to post the photos, story, and video.

THANK EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED VIA E-MAIL AND phone, and set up a meeting to plan your next event. Now you have a list of people in your community who can help make the next protest huge. Encourage everyone to commit to bring at least one friend to the next protest.

ORGANIZE A CARPOOL AND GO FIND A FRIEND IN your neighboring town or county and help them organize a protest there. You and your people are now veterans and should be able to keep the momentum going around your area.

ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT: BILLIE TUCKER

“Where are our leaders? Where are those who are responsible?” asks Billie Tucker, an entrepreneur from Jacksonville, Florida. It’s a question she has pondered the past two years.

“I came to the realization that no one in Washington, not the president, not the treasury secretary, not the candidates for president, and certainly no one in Congress had any clue what was going on or what to do. I trust these guys to mind the store and when the store is on fire, they didn’t even know where to find a garden hose. As a parent, it reminded me of how children behave when they don’t understand something: They make it up.”

Billie happened to have her TV on CNBC during Rick Santelli’s rant.

“He said what I was thinking!” she recalls.

Later that day, a friend called and asked Billie if she would be interested in helping plan a Tea Party event. Less than twenty-four hours later, more than seventy-five activists gathered for the first Jacksonville Tea Party.

What began as a small list of phone numbers later became the First Coast Tea Party, one of the largest and most active groups in the country. At the tax day protest in Jacksonville on April 15, the unlikely leader had a close look at what she helped create. “Crowd estimates told us that 5,000 people showed up that day,” she said. “It was hard to take in, especially as we saw ourselves on news reports across the country.”

Over the summer the First Coast Tea Party also chose to focus on congressional town halls. Intimidated by the prospect of active, well-informed attendees at live events, several Jacksonville area representatives opted for virtual meetings that connected voters by phone.

“We decided we would hold live town halls whether a congressman was there or not,” Billie said. “We taped their pictures to empty chairs on-stage. It did a good job of reflecting how we felt about communicating to Congress—talking to an empty chair.”

4. TRADITIONAL MEDIA

THERE ARE TWO TYPES of media coverage: earned and paid media. Earned media is free exposure for your organization. It is when the media shows up at an event and covers it or publishes your opinion. The content of earned media is up to the reporter and is difficult to control. Earned media is more credible and—best of all—it’s free.

Paid media, on the other hand, costs money. Paid media will