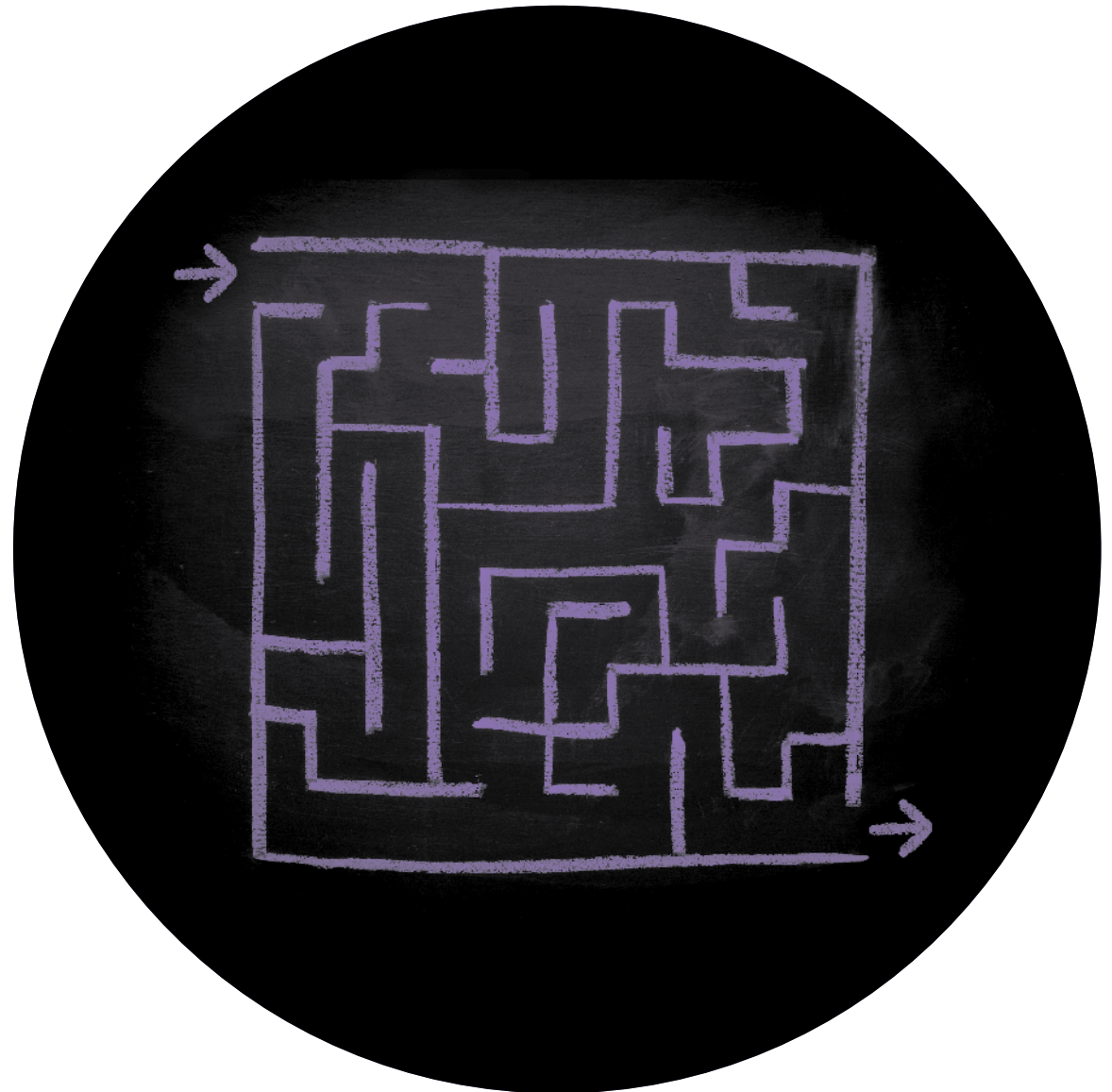


In Focus:

Persuasion or pressure? Campaigning and the private sector



Why is it important?

'...wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else.'

Aristotle

The private sector employs the majority of the workforce in many countries, owns much of the world's assets and has a huge effect on the environment, society and politics.

Campaigning focused on the private sector can bring results not only to shareholders but to individuals and to wider society; largely through effecting changes to the ways companies and individuals operate in securing a profit.

- The private sector has access to huge resources; the trillions of pounds traded in markets worldwide holds huge power to achieve change.
- A growing number of investors and companies are now actively engaging in environmental, social and corporate governance issues, which you can use to hold companies to account.
- Campaigners have an independent voice, which, when combined with the unique relationships campaigners have with beneficiaries, supporters and others, can prove extremely effective in influencing the private sector.

By the term 'private sector', we mean the part of an economy run by individuals or groups in order to secure a profit, and not controlled by the state – including every organisation from a multinational enterprise (MNE), to a small and medium enterprise (SME).

What does it involve?

As with all campaigning, one of the most important issues to consider is, simply – what is the ultimate aim of the campaign – the change you wish to see, the impact you want to make?



In setting your aim it is crucial to consider:

- The problems and potential solutions to the issue you have in mind.
- Conducting PEST and SWOT analyses around your issue (thinking of the political, economic, social and technological factors likely to influence your campaigning, as well as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to your organisation campaigning on this issue). Can you turn a threat into an opportunity and a weakness into a strength?
- Why you are focusing on private sector targets – are there other audiences you need to target as well such as public sector or Government?

From the aim you can then derive clear, realistic and achievable objectives in order to achieve it. You should develop your tactics after defining your aim and building your strategy to achieve change, instead of vice-versa.

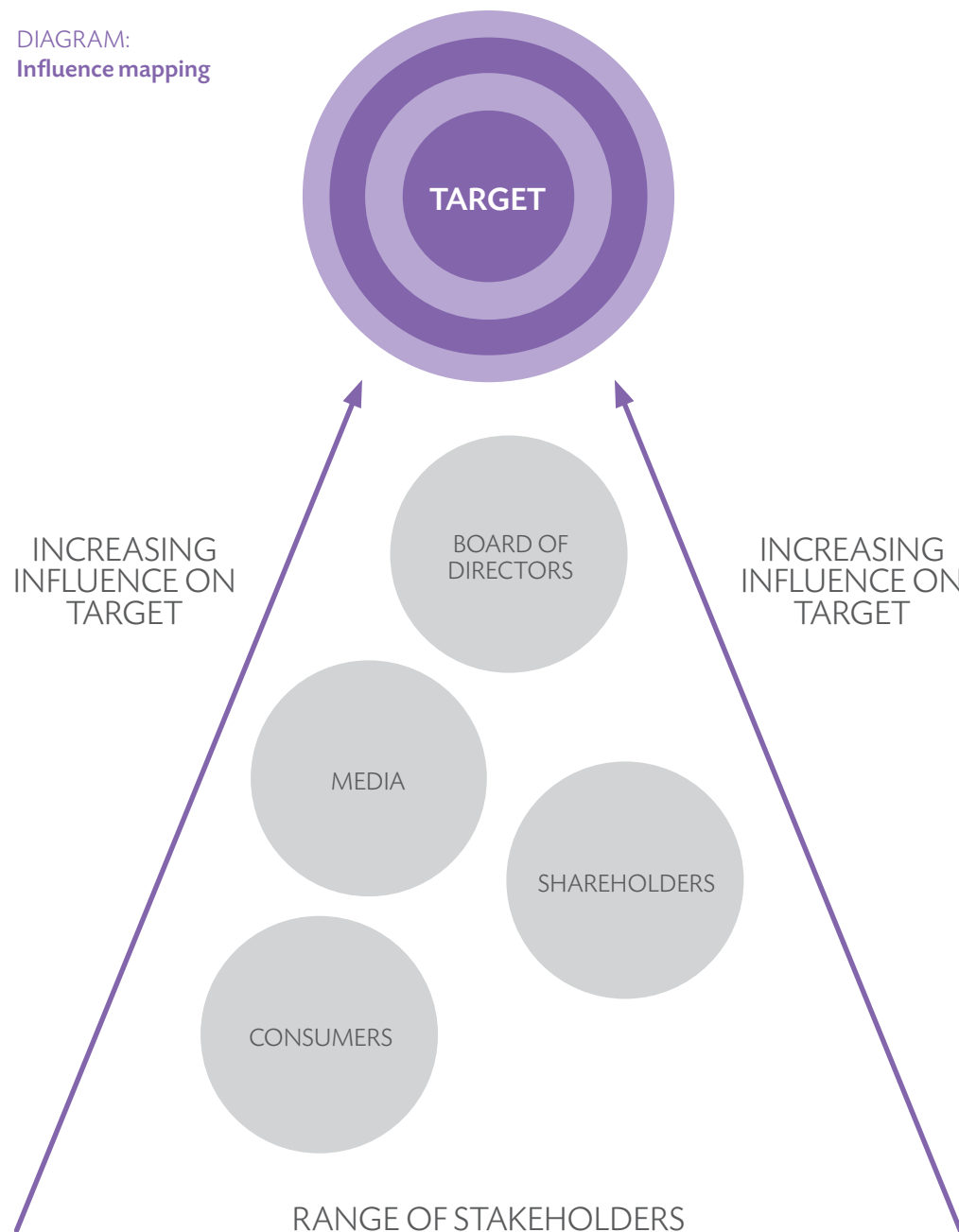
Influence mapping

Once you know your aim you then need to identify how and who you need to influence. An influence map is a useful way to identify which stakeholders have influence over the decisions made in the particular organisation, industry or sector you are targeting; to scope out the individuals to target for dialogue and communication.

You can use influencing mapping, especially useful in a discussion group, to map stakeholders for your campaign issue and assess the degree of influence they hold and their relationship with each other. The closer a stakeholder is to the top of the pyramid, the more influence they have over the issue.

It is important to consider not only who makes decisions in a particular company but who sets the agenda – which financial, social and political actors have influence on the wider market, political and social environment in which companies operate.

DIAGRAM:
Influence mapping



TIP: Monitor your campaign right from the beginning, to help keep you on track and better evaluate your overall effectiveness and impact.

Where do I start?

Analysing power

Using your mapping results to conduct a power analysis can be helpful to identify friends, foes and floaters. How much influence do you have over them? Can you make an alliance of the unexpected? You can use NCVO's publication, *Power and Social Change*, to assist you: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/influencingsocialchange>

FRIENDS	FLOATERS	FOES

Routes of influence and tactics

Routes of influence within a private sector organisation may be very different to reaching MPs or councillors. If you do not have any existing contacts with your target it is important to think creatively about who else you may be able to work with.

Once you have identified your routes to influence, it is essential to consider the best tactics to use to reach your targets, which could be a mixture of persuasion and pressure and could include some or all of the following:

- DIALOGUE AND LOBBYING
- SHAREHOLDER ACTION
- CONSUMER ACTION
- RESEARCH
- ONLINE ACTION
- DEMONSTRATIONS AND DIRECT ACTION

Many campaigns focused on the private sector also make use of some of the following: political lobbying, media, capacity building, public law advocacy and other methods. Finding the right balance can be crucial to the success of a campaign.

A key strength of campaigners can often be their effective use of a range of tactics. Targeting the government can be particularly successful to effect changes in regulation of the private sector whereas companies can be particularly sensitive to how they are reported in the media. There are risks and challenges to all of these approaches – engaging in direct action while lobbying a company could lessen the impact of your lobbying efforts, while engaging in lobbying after a public-facing campaign could result in losing supporters.

TIP: While it is important to have a developed campaign strategy you need to be flexible enough to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities – the campaigning landscape is often unpredictable.

The crucial issue to consider is your aim, principles and desired impact – what will be most conducive to achieving your aim and making a difference to people's lives vis-à-vis your overall vision and beliefs?

STEP 1:

Dialogue and persuasion

'If you wish to win a man over to your ideas, first make him your friend.'
Abraham Lincoln

A good first step is to try to build a relationship with your influencers, establish a line of communication and explain your concerns. It is usually best to begin with persuasion, moving onto pressure if necessary. Alternatively a mixture of both may prove more effective.

FORM OF CAMPAIGNING	TACTIC
Persuasion	Dialogue, communication and lobbying
Pressure	Shareholder activism, consumer activism, research, direct action, online activism, protest and demonstrations

Persuasion is crucial to dialogue, after establishing a line of communication you can begin to make both the business and the moral case to key decision-makers; do not assume that the only case that will be listened to will be the business case and vice-versa, a moral case without a sound business plan will probably not get much headway.

Be consistent with your message and consider indirect lobbying through networks, allies and other routes you may have – for example through Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs), MPs, media or other private sector organisations, if direct access to decision-makers is difficult to obtain.

TIP: If the financial risk to a company's existing behaviour and operation is significant, making a strong business case can be very effective. Vice-versa, if the financial risk is less, it may be more pertinent to emphasise the moral case with a strong financial underpinning.

EXAMPLE:
The Living Wage campaign

The Living Wage campaign, spearheaded by **London Citizens** and the **Trades Union Congress (TUC)** succeeded in persuading numerous companies to pay the London Living Wage (£7.60 per hour) to their lowest paid employees.

‘An idea whose time has come.’
 Prime Minister David Cameron, May 2010.

The campaign:

- Research conducted to understand members’ needs: The campaign built links within their membership base, empowering people with advocacy skills.
- The research led to a clear presentation of the moral and business case for the London Living Wage as well as, firstly, working to ensure London Citizens, its members and immediate contacts paid the Living Wage.
- Workers directly affected by low pay were organised to mount campaigns to improve wages.
- Targeted negotiation and lobbying with public and private sector employers on a local and regional level – small achievable goals set locally whereby groups targeted specific employers – scaled up organically as part of a wider strategy.

- The Living Wage Award established for businesses, and support gained from London Mayor Boris Johnson and his predecessor Mayor Ken Livingstone.
- Progress of the campaign was, and is, democratically monitored by members of London Citizens.
- Key employers now support the business case for the Living Wage, including Price Waterhouse Cooper, which seeks to roll it out across the country, possibly at a 10% lower rate.
- London Citizens continue to campaign to spread the Living Wage throughout London and nationally.

‘The key strategy is to get to the person who holds the power to make the decision... It is crucial to devise different tactics for different institutions to get a meeting with the right person.’ Paul Regan, London Citizens Trustee.¹

¹ For all quotations, see Littman, D., et al (Fair Pay Network, 2010) *Unfinished Business: The Quest for a Living Wage* (London, Fair Pay Network), pp. 13-14 and 26.

EXAMPLE:
The Fawcett Society

The Fawcett Society launched ‘**Sexism and the City**’ in 2008, a two year campaign highlighting womens’ experience of sexism in the UK workplace, with a particular focus on the City of London.

‘Only when Government, businesses and individual employees finally come together to effect changes will we see an end to the divisions between women and men at work.’²

The campaign:

- The Gender Equality Forum was launched in 2008, bringing together diversity practitioners from politics and business in a space for debate and leadership.
- The rise in ‘sex-object culture’ in workplaces became a major campaign focus, alongside exposing corporate entertainment in lap dancing clubs, and lobbying government to reform legislation around the licensing of lap dancing clubs.
- Research undertaken into ‘discreet receipts’ (receipts which disguise the name of the venue) and encouragement to businesses to audit expenses – introducing a competitive element.
- Targeted meetings initiated with employers and a Chatham house discussion organised. The campaign won the confidence of business employers in the FTSE 100, who were encouraged to spread the campaign message.

² Fawcett Society (2008) *Sexism and the City: The Manifesto* (London, Fawcett Society): <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/documents/SATC%20manifesto%20public.pdf>

- The media debate on lap dancing raised through coverage in the London press – raising public awareness of lap dancing as a cultural question.
- The Fawcett Charter launched, representing a coalition of progressive employers, who joined to promote an inclusive work environment challenging the objectification of women – signatories include household names such as the BT Group; the Olympic Delivery Authority and Barclays Wealth.
- Legislative change achieved to the way lap dancing clubs are licensed – tightening controls and enabling local communities to have a greater say in whether a lap dancing club should open.

TIP: Careful planning leading to targeted negotiation, dialogue and lobbying can be extremely effective. Moving from persuasion to pressure – through building public or member focused campaigns, media support and lobbying government where appropriate can create a particularly powerful campaign.

STEP 2:

Pressure

'...one ought to be both feared and loved, but as it is difficult for the two to go together, it is far safer to be feared than loved.'

Niccolò Machiavelli

Shareholder activism

If persuasion has limited success, it can be effective to pressure companies and corporations through leveraging the power of shareholders; urging them to exercise their 'right to know' how their money is being used. Shareholder activism has been growing in recent years as investors realise that ethical issues in investee companies can have financial consequences.

'It is important to ask lots of questions, and talk to others such as environmental groups about what they know. It is difficult to do things alone – you need to link up to other networks.' Barbara Hayes, shareholder activist – tabled a resolution at Shell's AGM in 1997, calling on the company to set itself stringent environmental and ethical standards, and for these to be applied consistently worldwide. The resolution is seen as a turning point in shareholder activism.³

Shareholder activism can take a number of forms, from the relatively cheap and simple tactics of meeting and/or briefing big investors about your ethical and business case, to buying a share so you can attend and ask questions at a company's Annual General Meeting (AGM). More complex is working with shareholders to put forward investor resolutions. In each case it may be worth seeking the advice of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who have tried this before, such as FairPensions and Amnesty.

You can put forward resolutions (proposals submitted by shareholders for a vote at a company's AGM) of your own – to do this you need the support of at least 100 other shareholders. It is wise to gain the support of some large shareholders, because resolutions require a minimum value of shareholdings as well as a minimum number of shareholders – you will need to check the minimum value before starting your campaign.

TIP: Most large companies are 'public companies' – they are 'publicly listed' on a stock exchange, meaning their shares can be bought and sold by the public. However, some large companies and most small companies are 'private companies' – they are not listed on the stock exchange and their shares cannot be bought and sold by the general public, making them harder to influence. They do however have shareholders and so influencing them through targeting shareholders is still a viable option.

³ Barbara Hayes, cited in EIRIS (2001) 'Ethical Share Ownership', in *Ethical Investor*, p.2

EXAMPLE:

Tar Sands: Counting the Cost

The Tar Sands: Counting the Cost campaign, launched by **FairPensions**, supported by Greenpeace, The Co-operative and others, encouraged pension funds and other shareholders to express concern over decisions taken by oil companies to invest in tar sands (or oil sands) development. The concerns relate to huge increases in greenhouse gas emissions, financial risk, pollution, wildlife disturbance and threats to indigenous communities.

- Most unique tactic – mobilising NGO activists to email their pension funds in support of the campaign.
- Core tactics – support secured from 150 shareholders to table resolutions at the 2010 meetings of Royal Dutch Shell plc and BP plc, together with a coalition of NGOs – between 1/10th and 1/7th of investors defied company management.
- Coverage in mainstream newspapers and the investment press.
- Briefings / negotiations with UK and international investors – putting the business and ethical case.
- An Early Day Motion (EDM) raised in Parliament by a cross-party group of MPs.
- Disclosures of information from Shell and BP following support for shareholder resolutions, leading to company-investor dialogue re-examining the risks.

'Although this campaign is intensive – the tactics employed...can be deployed on a smaller scale, especially if the target positions are less entrenched.' Duncan Exley, Director of Campaigns, FairPensions 2010.

FairPensions leverage the power of shareholder action to improve the social and environmental impact of companies.

**EXAMPLE:
Amnesty International (UK)**

Amnesty International (UK) has campaigned to urge shareholders of Shell to question the Board at the AGM over how the company in May 2010, is failing in its business principles in the Niger Delta, causing pollution of the environment, which the local people rely on.

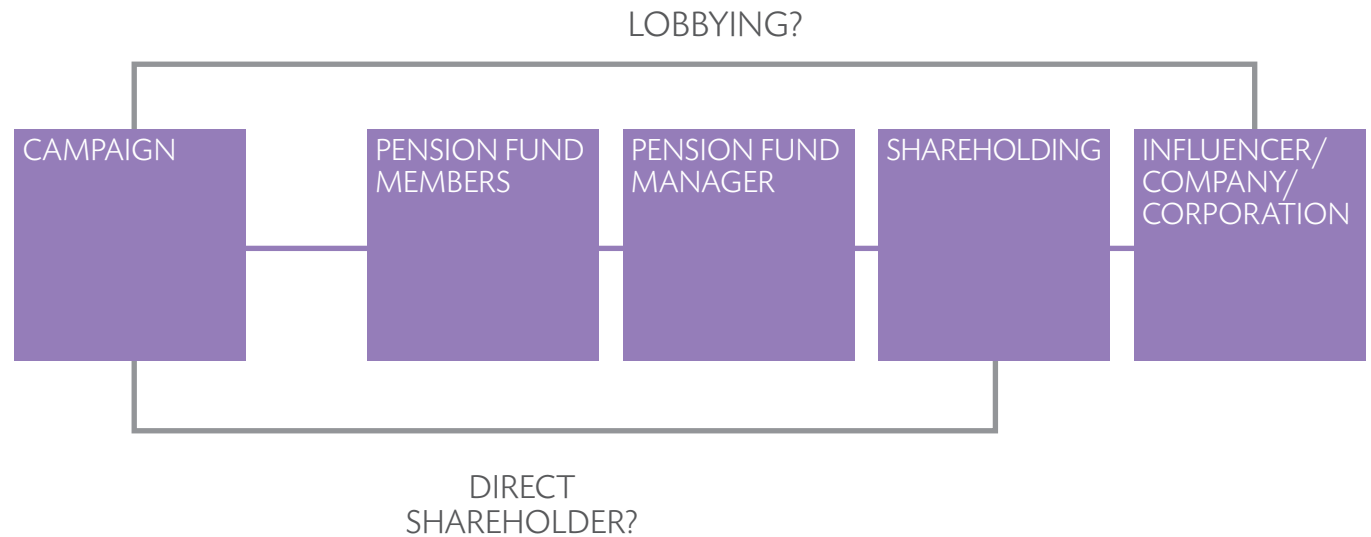
'...we didn't have the budgeted funds to run this campaign so we decided to put our faith in our supporters and ask them to donate the funds needed.' Reuben Steains, Fundraising Innovations Manager, Amnesty International.⁴

- Prominent advert placed in major newspapers (funded by supporters) and displayed online by over 70 media sites (newspapers, blogs and trade media), as well as driven around London by an ad van and tracked on Google maps.
- Shareholders of Shell engaged over campaign issues in order to raise the campaign cause at Shell's AGM.
- Hand-over of global petition to Shell's AGM which included photographs of demonstrations held by Amnesty activists in front of Shell petrol stations across the UK.
- Shell announced a commitment of \$2 billion to reduce gas flaring in the Niger Delta in coming years.
- Fundraising target exceeded and a lot of new supporters engaged
- Supporters engaged through new social media – the online response through Twitter and Facebook led to Amnesty's biggest online 'splash'.

Tabling resolutions can be a time-consuming business – often required months in advance. Though shareholders are technically required to cover the costs for tabling a resolution, common practice is that for resolutions tabled before a certain date, the company will pay for the printing and circulation costs – it is important, therefore, to check the date set out by the company before starting your campaign. Support from third parties – e.g. VCOs, is often crucial.

Campaigners can be shareholders themselves – in 2001 Friends of the Earth submitted a resolution calling on construction company Balfour Beatty to support the principles and guidelines set out by the World Commission on dams in regard to its involvement in the controversial Ilisu dam in Turkey. Though defeated, the resolution highlighted the campaign issue – and over 40% of votes were abstentions.

This diagram represents possible influencing routes using shareholder activism.



TIP: It may be necessary to mobilise pension fund members, investment manager clients or investment bank customers, for example, to lobby investors (such as fund managers) to encourage shareholder action.

TIP: Shareholders can often be companies, pension funds or insurance firms – map who to influence in the organisation – e.g. which fund managers to target, and have a clear strategy of what to do with the shareholders once you have mobilised them.

⁴ Reuben Steains, quoted in 'The Amnesty International Shame Shell campaign', Showcase of Fundraising and Innovation and Inspiration (SOFII) May 2010: <http://www.sofii.org/node/553>

Consumer activism

Alongside the growth of consumerism there has been a growth in the awareness and exercising of consumer rights, to question the behaviour of companies on financial, social, environmental or corporate governance grounds.

EXAMPLE:

Busts 4 Justice

Beckie Williams set up an internet campaign 'Busts 4 Justice' on networking website Facebook, calling for Marks and Spencer (M&S) to drop their surcharge on large bras, following what she deemed to be price discrimination.

'Busty ladies and anyone else with a vested interest in busty ladies – in fact anyone with a vested interest in simple justice, join forces to end this blatant discrimination.'

Beckie Williams, 2009.⁵

- Almost 12,000 people added their names to the Facebook campaign Beckie set up.
- Initially, an email leaked from M&S revealed that they would not back down.
- Beckie Williams bought a share in M&S (for just £3.40) in order to attend the firm's AGM to raise the issue.
- Within weeks, Marks and Spencer dropped the extra charge and reduced the price of all bras by 25% in response to the amount of people who supported Beckie's campaign, and the media coverage it gained.

EXAMPLE:

Fighting the Occupation in Palestine

Fighting the Occupation in Palestine, a campaign by **War on Want**, supports Palestinian civil society in building a global movement of **boycott, divestment and sanctions** against Israel until it complies with international law.

One of the primary focuses of the campaign in the UK has been on promoting the boycott of consumer goods produced in Israel's illegal West Bank settlements and sold in the UK by High Street supermarkets.

*'Campaigners...distributed leaflets calling on shoppers to boycott all Israeli goods until Israel complies with international law.'*⁶

Features of the consumer boycott part of the campaign have included:

- Letter writing to UK supermarkets calling on them not to stock produce grown in areas of illegal Israeli settlements.
- Occupation of a Waitrose supermarket in London due to stocking produce from illegal Israeli settlements.
- E-actions in which supporters emailed BT requesting they cut ties with Israeli company Bezeq, which provides telecommunications support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Other companies were also targeted.

- Campaigners / supporters urged to target local authorities and universities requesting they implement ethical investment policies, in regard to ending contracts with companies operating in or with links to the illegal Israeli settlements.
- Reports launched exploring how high street names in Britain are implicated in Israel's war crimes.
- Filmed messages from activists in Israel/Palestine.
- Lobbying government to end export of UK military equipment to Israel.
- Dialogue with relevant companies, media coverage and the issue raised with, and support gained from, consumers, companies and decision-makers.

⁵ Quoted in 'Marks and Spencer drop surcharge on larger bras', Daily Record, May 8, 2009: <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/>

uk-world-news/2009/05/08/marks-spencer-drop-surcharge-on-larger-bras-86908-21341528/

⁶ 'War on Want occupies Waitrose', War on Want website, 6 April, 2010

EXAMPLE:
The Nestlé boycott and company campaign

The Nestlé boycott and company campaign by **Baby Milk Action**, aims to stop the irresponsible marketing of breast milk substitutes by Nestlé and other companies, and for those companies to meet their responsibilities under the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

*'As Nestlé knows, babies fed on breast milk substitutes are more likely to become ill than breastfed babies and, in conditions of poverty, more likely to die.'*⁷

The campaign has included:

- Targeting Nestlé: Setting up the Campaign for Ethical Marketing, producing resources for supporters, organising demonstrations and the International Nestlé-Free Week.
- Web-based campaigns (creating the 'Nestlé Critics website', using film clips, Facebook and Twitter) and support of student unions, churches and others to bring in boycott motions.
- Attending shareholder meetings to raise concerns and debates with Nestlé executives as well as ongoing dialogue with company executives.
- Complaints registered regarding violations of the UN Global Compact and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (a report on Nestlé developed with other organisations).
- International advocacy including: creation of the Baby Feeding Law Group (BFLG), contribution to NGO reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and working to improve existing regulation and participation in a Task Force of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition.

EXAMPLE:

Consumer action can be combined with shareholder activism and has a long history – in 1888 social reformer **Annie Besant** called for a boycott of Bryant and May matches through her campaigning weekly *The Link*, due to the low wages paid to the match girls.

- The 1400 women workers ('match girls') went on strike.
- Public meetings organised, MPs lobbied and shareholders shamed into action.
- The result included higher wages and the establishment of a Matchmakers Union.

STEP 3:
Research

'It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.'

Warren Buffet – Investor, industrialist and philanthropist.

While research should be factored in some form and level into all campaign strategies, some organisations have used it effectively to build up a body of knowledge about the behaviour of corporations; challenging dominant narratives and feeding understanding into advocacy work.

It is useful to examine a company's own rhetoric on environmental and social issues, as well as the history of previous targeted action by campaigners. This will give you an idea of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as your potential allies.

EXAMPLE:
Corporate Watch

Corporate Watch is an independent, not-for-profit research and publishing group. It believes that the detrimental effects corporations have on society and the environment is an inevitable result of their legal structure, where directors are legally bound to maximise profits to shareholders.⁸

Corporate Watch believe that to progress toward a just and equitable society, the economic and political power corporations exert must be dismantled. It works to achieve this by exposing the mechanisms by which corporations function and the detrimental effects they have on society and the environment.⁹

Corporate Watch has:

- Provided a wide range of campaigns and activist groups with 'information for action' but also empowered them to do their own research through providing resources such as *The Corporate Watch DIY Guide to how to research companies*.¹⁰
- Created extensive critical profiles of companies in different industry areas, detailing their known and less-known activities and exposing their 'corporate crimes'.¹¹
- Conducted numerous thematic research projects on a range of issues, from GM and climate change technologies to aid and development in 'third-world' countries, as well as companies profiting from armed conflicts.
- Utilised a variety of methods to disseminate information and analysis, from maps and comics, text reports and videos, to talks, workshops and stalls.

⁷ Mike Brady, *Baby Milk Action*, cited in 'Over 140,000 people call for United Nations to protect, promote and support

breastfeeding and appropriate information', *Baby Milk Action Campaign blog*, September 2010

⁸ Spencer, R. (2004, *Corporate Watch*) *Corporate law and structures* (London, Corporate Watch). Available online: <http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/download.php?id=43>

⁹ Corporate Watch, ed. Sales and Spencer (2002) *The Corporate Watch DIY guide to How to research companies* (London, Corporate Watch), is available online: <http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=2142>

¹⁰ See: <http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/download.php?id=31>

¹¹ See: <http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=402>

EXAMPLE:
The Corner House

The Corner House supports democratic and community movements for environmental and social justice. It carries out analysis, research and advocacy to link issues and stimulate informed discussion.

'An important area of our work concerns the public financing of projects that have socially and/or environmentally destructive impacts overseas'
Nicholas Hildyard, Director,
The Corner House.¹²

- Use of innovative research techniques such as Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, fact-finding missions and legal interventions.
- Research on government-funded projects with corporate partners worldwide vis-à-vis environmental and social impact – e.g. the BP backed Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline in the Caucasus and Turkey.
- The research informed advocacy work through alliances and involvement in Parliamentary Committees, public consultations, correspondence, press releases and reports.
- Campaigning guide and other materials produced – *Campaigners Guide to Financial Markets*.
- Using FOI, The Corner House was able to argue that the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), for example, was breaking its own guidelines in regard to its support for the BP-backed pipeline; the research was channelled effectively into the work of the Business & Enterprise Committee and the Baku Ceyhan Campaign.

Crucial to the campaign successes of The Corner House has been effective use of research (such as FOI to uncover information about the BTC pipeline) to inform lobbying work aimed at government and the civil service, in regard to the activities of the private sector – through parliamentary committees, legal interventions, public consultations and correspondence.

The Corner House has also conducted financial market campaigning and analysed in-depth the nature of different companies and corporations, in regard to advocacy opportunities.

'A key lesson from such campaigns is that their effectiveness is greatly enhanced when activists understand the culture and psychology of the financial institutions that they are seeking to influence.' Hildyard and Mansley, *Campaigners Guide to Financial Markets*.¹³

TIP: Even if your campaign target is a multinational company, it is important to understand that its 'modes of operation' may be very local, and that the culture of financial institutions are never fixed but changing in response to market dynamics, as well as, in some cases, campaigning.

TIP: The preoccupation in financial markets on speculation – weighing up risks in regard to financial gain and loss, presents campaigners with a 'series of leverage points'. Using research can help you understand when to use whichever tactic or step outlined in this guide.

¹² See Hadley, P. (NCVO, 2010) *Voicing your right to know* (London, NCVO), p.25

STEP 4:
Other strategies

Other tactics include efforts to influence government policy on the private sector (a recent example being the Robin Hood Tax campaign to raise a levy on international financial transactions), as well as mass demonstrations and social movements such as the anti-globalisation or 'global justice movement', which, through the World Social Forum, consider alternatives to market-focused development.

Direct action

While there are risks with direct action – as a charity for example you cannot break the law or encourage others to do so, non-violent actions outside of mainstream political channels of expression form an essential part of a campaigners' repertoire. Though you need to consider the potential risks of alienating your supporters, target audiences or both, and consider what is most conducive to achieving your aim – direct action – marches, stunts or demonstrations, for example, can achieve a huge impact and be extremely effective.

¹³ Hildyard, N. and Mansley, M. (*The Corner House*, 2010) *Campaigners Guide to Financial Markets*, p.8; Hadley P. (NCVO) *Voicing your right to know*, pp. 24-26; <http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk>

EXAMPLE:
Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) organises regular demonstrations, protests and awareness-raising events; one of which involved a public trial of an effigy of the chairman of arms producing company BAE Systems, followed by questioning of the chairman himself (as part of a wider campaign).

- CAAT engage in a wide range of campaigning tactics to achieve their aims, including lobbying, engaging the media, research and policy work, volunteer-led campaigning, online campaigning, FOI requests and capacity building support.

EXAMPLE:

UK Tar Sands Network

UK Tar Sands Network campaigns with indigenous communities affected by the Tar Sands oil developments in Alberta, Canada, by targeting UK banks and investors.

The Network co-ordinates campaigning between shareholder activism and direct action groups, to target British Petroleum (BP), Shell and the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS). Campaign features have included:

- BP's AGM in 2010 – Grassroots '*brand damage*' campaign, including two weeks of direct action closing down BP garages all over the UK – to coincide with the Fair Pensions and Green Peace-led AGM resolutions.
- Direct action stunts at the Tate Gallery in London, highlighting the role of their corporate sponsor, BP, in Tar Sands. Direct action was also used to draw attention to First Nations speaker tours.
- Use of online social forums and video to populate the actions with Canadian Environmental organisations and grassroots movements.
- International media attention to the campaign generated to coincide with lobbying trips by the Canadian Government to the UK.
- Recent outcomes include increased public and shareholder awareness, as well as network building with other organisations.

Online actions can be very effective and offer an innovative way of involving supporters, beneficiaries and others in a campaign:

TIP: Getting the right mixture of online and offline actions can be key to a successful campaign, for example in effectively engaging with and retaining supporters gained through e-petitions and use of social media.

EXAMPLE:

Greenpeace

Greenpeace organised a two month campaign (Nestlé Killer), urging Nestlé to stop using products sourced from companies whose activities led to deforestation in Indonesia – threatening the livelihoods of local people and pushing orang-utans towards extinction.

The campaign tapped into the potential of people to participate through social media, resulting in a huge public outcry, which Greenpeace turned effectively into pressure. Nestlé committed to stop using products which lead to rainforest destruction.

Features of the campaign:

- Research conducted into Nestlé's communications strategy, which revealed the potential power of social media as a counter-strategy.
- A series of supporter actions asking the public for campaign ideas and donations towards newspaper adverts, allowing the public to take ownership of the campaign.
- An e-mail campaign urging supporters to e-mail Nestlé with campaign messages and a spoof Kit Kat homepage set up by Greenpeace.

- Supporters spread the message via Facebook, Twitter and blogs.
- 'Have a break?' video on YouTube, which became a huge viral hit, the removal of which led to a huge increase in support including spin-off videos and increased viewing.
- Public stunt at Nestlé's UK headquarters, in which Greenpeace volunteers dressed as orang-utans urged staff to 'Have a Break'.
- Campaign report given to The Sun newspaper as an exclusive.

The campaign was part of a longer campaign in which Greenpeace lobbied Nestlé and other major brands on the same issue.

What next?

Google bombing is a tactic used to manipulate how pages are ranked in the results returned by search engines. Chris Bowers, a left-liberal blogger in the United States, used a Google bomb against a list of Republican candidates in the 2006 US midterm elections – highlighting perceived negative media stories against the candidates in Google searches. In 2003, pharmacist and academic at Aston University in the UK, Anthony Cox, created a spoof page of the '404 – page not found' browser error message, in response to the war in Iraq; on typing 'weapons of mass destruction' into Google, the error page appeared, which read, 'These Weapons of Mass Destruction cannot be displayed'.

An effective method is to place links or keywords to news articles and blog posts (or whatever is the desired target) from sources which already have a high rank in search engines. The larger the number of people who tweet, blog or post on Facebook targeted keywords (yet written in their own wording), the better.

Social networks

EXAMPLE: Trafigura and Twitter

In October 2009 a gagging order was imposed on public reporting, by the Guardian newspaper, of a parliamentary question by John Bercow MP regarding the activities of oil company Trafigura. Online outrage by users of the social networking website Twitter, including a campaign to spread the information the Guardian was banned from publishing, was a major pressure-factor in the decision by Trafigura to withdraw its gagging attempt.¹⁴

EXAMPLE: The Camp for Climate Action (CCA)

The Camp for Climate Action (CCA), a grassroots movement of diverse people taking actions on climate change, uses new social media to organise actions (including the annual Climate Camp) and engage with supporters, facilitating its decentralised working methods. In 2009, energy company E.ON started a YouTube feed in which they posted videos arguing their case for coal power. CCA and Plane Stupid posted their own videos on the YouTube 'feed' to provide effective counter-arguments – using the power of social media to disrupt E.ON's communications strategy.

We hope this guide will encourage you to think strategically about campaigning directed at or involving the private sector. There is a significant opportunity to build on the approaches and examples in this guide and to take advantage of the influence of the private sector, the growing corporate social responsibility agenda and the unique skills campaigners have to effect positive social change.

CHECKLIST FOR PRIVATE SECTOR CAMPAIGNING

Scope your issue and develop a clear aim – what do you want to achieve?.

Map your targets, influencers – allies and opponents.

Will you use persuasion or pressure? It is often effective to begin with persuasion.

Which particular tactics will you use? Dialogue, lobbying or shareholder activism, consumer activism, direct action, online actions, research? Will you use a mix vis-à-vis your aim?

The private sector is diverse. Will your campaign be locally-focused, regional, national or a combination?

Researching your targets and ways of influence is often key to success – how will you make the business and/or moral case? Who will you make it to?

Can you work with others – coalitions and allies for example to maximise impact and demonstrate broad support?

How will you integrate your private sector-focused campaigning with other forms of campaigning?

How will you monitor and evaluate outcomes and impact? It is wise to monitor your campaign from the beginning through all stages.

¹⁴ See Leigh, D (2009) 'Trafigura drops bid to gag Guardian over MP's question', *The Guardian*: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/oct/13/trafigura-drops-gag-guardian-oil>

Resources

Putting it into practice

If you have five minutes...

- Consider if any of your supporters, beneficiaries or target audiences have links with private sector organisations, to explore for advocacy opportunities.
- Read other In Focus guides.

If you have two hours...

- Consider what it is you wish to achieve in your campaign – do a PEST and SWOT analysis then draw up an influence map of stakeholders and decision-makers you need to target.
- Consider whether persuasion or pressure – or a mixture of both will be most effective.
- Contact an ally or an influencer to begin establishing a line of communication.

If you have one day...

- Conduct a power analysis to work out routes of influence.
- Devise a program of tactics and strategies.
- Arrange and attend a meeting with an ally, stakeholder or key target
- Do some research into your target organisation.
- Establish the grounds of your case on business and ethical grounds.
- Consider how private-sector focused campaigning can be integrated with campaigning focused on government or individuals, for example, and how you may use social media.

FairPensions

<http://www.fairpensions.org.uk/>

See *toolkit on shareholder activism*

<http://www.fairpensions.org.uk/getinvolved>

London Citizens (part of Citizens UK)

<http://www.citizensuk.org/about/london-citizens/>

Fawcett Society

<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/>

Amnesty International

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/>

War on Want

<http://www.waronwant.org/>

Baby Milk Action

<http://www.babymilkaction.org/>

Corporate Watch

<http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/>

The Corner House

<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/>

See *A Campaigners Guide to Financial Markets*
<http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/resource/campaigners%E2%80%99-guide-financial-markets>

The Robin Hood Tax

<http://robinhoodtax.org.uk/>

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)

<http://www.caat.org.uk/>

UK Tar Sands Network

<http://www.no-tar-sands.org/>
and <http://tarsandsinfocus.wordpress.com/>

Greenpeace

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/autofrontpage>

Camp for Climate Action

<http://www.climatecamp.org.uk/>

Further reading

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The Amnesty International Shame Shell campaign', *Showcase of Fundraising and Innovation and Inspiration (SOFII)* May 2010: <http://www.sofii.org/node/553>

Further reading continued

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Waygood, S (2006), *Capital Market Campaigning: The impact of NGOs on companies, shareholder value and reputational risk* (London, Risk books)

About Campaigning Effectiveness, NCVO

Campaigning Effectiveness, NCVO

supports and empowers people and organisations to change their world through campaigning and influencing policy. We bring together experience and expertise and drive excellence in campaigning and policy work across civil society by providing support, knowledge, tools and resources. For further information about our work go to www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/campaigningeffectiveness

About Forum for Change

The Forum for Change, funded by the Big Lottery Fund is a network for people influencing policy and campaigning for change across the voluntary and community sector. Membership is free and open to everyone. To join or for further information go to www.forumforchange.org.uk or email forumforchange@ncvo-vol.org.uk

About In Focus

In Focus guides are produced for Forum for Change members as part of the Policy Skills Development Programme. Other titles include:

- Building your evidence base
- Commissioning research
- Influencing devolved governments
- Involving people that matter
- Integrating social media
- Making sense of the external environment
- Policy development
- Working with Whitehall

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/infocus

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