Successful advocacy campaigns are rooted in being able to reach the right person or group of people who can unlock change. These people have the ability to use their power to make a difference on the issue you’re fighting for. However, it’s not always easy to figure out how to reach the right people, so we have a few tools and strategies that can help.

**Decision Makers**

Think about the issue you’re advocating for and envision the impact you are seeking. The key decision makers are the ones who can create the change you want.

Here are some questions to help identify the decision makers in your campaign:

- Who created the issue at hand?
- Who has the power to fix the issue?
- Who is already working on fixing the issue?

**Influencers**

Next, there are also influencers to consider for your campaign. Influencers often include people who the decision makers work with or are affiliated with. For example, if you’re trying to reach the CEO of a company, one strategy is to reach out to the company’s employees who can bring the message upward to the CEO. Other influencers that can help in this example include the company’s board of directors, the media, prominent industry groups and other industry leaders who may have influence over the CEO.

To identify influencers to include in your campaign, consider the following:

- Who does the decision maker turn to for advice or support?
- Does the decision maker answer to a governing board?
- Does the decision maker have employees or business associates?
People Who Hold Power and How To Find Their Contact Info

- Are there other leaders that influence the decision maker?
- Does the decision maker have donors or supporters?
- Does the decision maker belong to any groups or associations (e.g. industry groups, faith groups, etc.)?

Allies

Finally, we need to think about allies that can help your campaign. They can amplify your message and mobilize more support. For example, your campaign may want to leverage the support of NGOs that are relevant to your cause in order to bring more attention and resources to the issue. Or perhaps there are political figures who are aligned with your stance that can speak to the media or generate awareness amongst their network of supporters.

Here are some questions to consider to help identify your allies:

- Who has already spoken out about the issue?
- Who has also been impacted by the issue?
- Are there nonprofits that work in the space or related space?
- Are there community groups, associations or unions that can lend their support?

Power Mapping

Now it’s time to map it out. In this activity, there are two things to consider: 1) how strongly the stakeholder supports or opposes your campaign goal and 2) how powerful or influential they are. For each stakeholder, it’s up to you to assess where they belong on the map.
Once you have it mapped out, it’s easier to see where the best points to apply pressure are. Given limited time and capacity, you may want to focus your campaign on those who are powerful and can be swayed to support your campaign. Other strategies include building a chain of engagement, starting from targets who may have less power but are easier to engage with and getting them to influence targets with more power.

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- Level: Beginner
- Time to read: 12 minutes
Now that you have targets identified, how do we actually reach these people?

Government officials are usually required to have their contact info publicly available. However, for corporations, contact info can be more difficult to find. Some CEOs and employees have their contact info listed on their company website, but others require some digging. This is where sites like CEO Email and Rocket Reach come handy. These sites have searchable directories with thousands and millions of professionals and information such as phone numbers, email addresses and more (note: Rocket Reach allows 5 free looks up per month and costs $49/mo after that). There are also consumer advocacy organizations like Fair Shake and Elliott Advocacy that maintain databases of executive contacts to help customers reach out to companies.

Finally, it’s also worth reaching out to a company’s PR team or even using the generic email address listed under a company’s Contact Us. If a company is inundated with enough emails (and calls and tweets!), it becomes increasingly harder for the message to be ignored.

Now it’s your turn! Who holds the power to influence change for your campaign?