DRAW THE MAP

ORGANIZERS USE A technique called “power mapping” or “influ- ence mapping” to formalize the process that Gemma outlines. It asks you to understand the spheres of relationships and motivators that influence your decision-maker. This is often a visual exercise, in which people quite literally map out—draw, list, diagram—how they might be able to sway a decision-maker toward action. If you understand the people, institutions, and processes that motivate and influence someone, then you are better equipped to persuade them.

As you go through this exercise, it’s important to clearly under- stand and denote any relationships between the people on your map. How many connections are there between key people, and how strong are those connections? How likely would each of those people or institutions be to support your idea? Are there primary and secondary decision-makers, and if so, how are they related? Are there any smaller asks you can start with that will help build to the bigger and final ask? This process will also help you clarify the order in which you approach people to get to the ultimate decision-maker, starting with the strongest connections and those most likely to support your idea.

To truly understand the effects of power mapping, consider this example. Throughout 2012, a campaign to end the Boy Scouts of America’s (BSA) ban on gay Scouts and gay Scout leaders built momentum on Change.org. In April 2012, Jennifer Tyrrell, who had

served for a year as den leader of her son’s Cub Scout pack in Ohio, was removed from this position and had her BSA membership re- voked because she was gay. Soon afterward, and with the support of GLAAD, she launched a petition on Change.org asking the BSA to end this discriminatory policy. She and her supporters knew that they were facing an uphill battle. The Boy Scouts of America is a century-old institution that is not known for changing its policies. So Jennifer and others in her movement began to look at other ways they might be able to persuade the BSA to change, beginning with a thorough review of the various people and institutions that had in- fluence on the actions of the BSA.

They started with the BSA’s board of directors, which included a host of Fortune 500 CEOs, several of whom led companies like AT&T and Ernst & Young that were at the forefront of the fight for LGBTQ rights. Jennifer launched an additional petition directed to AT&T and Ernst & Young asking their CEOs to speak out in favor of changing the policy, and both of them did. Next, the team looked at corporations that had partnerships with the Boy Scouts of America. From there, they homed in on the companies that had the best re- cord on LGBTQ rights according to the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index. That led to petitions asking companies like Intel, UPS, and others to speak out about the Boy Scouts’ ban on gay Scouts and leaders. All the companies did.

In addition to leveraging the voices of companies and corporate leaders, the team also asked famous celebrities, politicians, and other notable figures with ties to the Boy Scouts to speak out on social media in favor of changing the policy. They persuaded musi-

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cians like Carly Rae Jepsen and Train not to perform at a concert at the Boy Scout Jamboree, a very large national conference of Boy Scouts held every four years.

Lastly, they mapped out the national and local structure of the BSA. As they learned, the BSA is composed of a number of local Scout councils all throughout the United States. They leveraged every part of the power map by helping to launch 110 petitions on Change.org, urging the councils to ask the national organization to end their ban on gay Scouts and leaders. Each petition was started by someone who cared about this issue and had some personal connection to it— including gay people who themselves had been Scouts or leaders or who had gay parents who were Scout leaders—demonstrating the size and diversity of the community that cared about this issue.

All of these additional campaigns with smaller asks were di- rected toward people and institutions within the influence map of the BSA and helped to create an incredible wave of momentum and media attention. Finally, just over a year after the initial petition was launched, the BSA voted to end the ban on gay Scouts on May 23, 2013. And two years later, in July 2015, the BSA also lifted its ban on gay Scout leaders. In the end, no single campaign changed the minds of the BSA. Instead, the movement succeeded because of the coordinated efforts of more than one hundred smaller, related campaigns, each directed at people within the BSA’s spheres of in- fluence. What had started as a single campaign directed at the BSA grew into a national movement with nearly 1.5 million supporters.

The movement created a win-win. It made sense for the BSA to listen to and engage with the people who were asking them for

change, and in the end, the change they made was also likely better for the long-term success of their organization. Public opinion shifted dramatically in favor of gay rights during those years, fol- lowed by a wave of legal reforms as twenty-five states voted in favor of same-sex marriage in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that banning same-sex marriage was unconstitutional. Given this change in perspective, the BSA’s new policy ultimately put them on the side of public opinion as well, a positive outcome for their organization and for the people who were proposing the change.

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