



# Campaigner's Guide

## Managing Turnover and Maintaining Sustainable Leadership Within Your Campaign

At some point in every type of campaign, leaders will have to pass on the torch to other members. Whether your leaders are graduating, moving, or simply don't have the time, we want to make sure that the next leaders are knowledgeable and prepared to carry on the work of the campaign. We gathered research on sustainable leadership and interviewed campaign organizers on the turnover process to bring you the best tips and tricks for keeping your campaign active over the years.

### Increase Your Membership Pool

#### *Engage a diverse group of people*

- Having committee members with different interests, passions, and backgrounds will strengthen your team and allow your campaign to continue to appeal to a broad base of people.
- Make yourself present at a variety of events in your community, and have promotional materials and pitches ready to share. Showing up to a lot of different events will ensure that you're reaching people from all backgrounds and experiences.
  - For example, representatives of a Fair Trade campaign may attend an Earth Day event, a farmer's market, street fairs and other celebrations in town, club fairs at schools or colleges, or a human trafficking awareness raising event – the possibilities are endless.
- After the event, be prompt with following up! Give people examples of work that they can do to get involved or more events that they can attend with the campaign.

#### *Offer different levels of engagement*

- Many new volunteers or members will be looking for opportunities to get involved and are ready to jump in. Others might have a more casual interest or have less time to commit. Either way, it's important to recognize the needs of each member and create space for them in your campaign.
- Some members may feel more comfortable having a specific job or outlined expectations. There may not be a need to create a position for every member, but communicating how work is delegated and what is expected can create a more transparent and welcoming environment.
  - For example, a campaign may need a social media manager, event coordinator, and/or someone to train new members.
- When recruiting new members or volunteers it's important that you have things for them to do! New members may be less likely to stick around if their skills aren't being utilized. Consider the current objectives of your campaign, and develop relevant tasks and projects that new members can start working on right away.

“Create small projects lead by one or two people, allowing a more equal balance of responsibility and structure”  
**Yoko, Fair Trade Philadelphia**

## Recognize Different Strengths

### Match campaign needs to volunteer strengths

- Discovering what your campaign could benefit most from will help the campaign draw in new people with specific skillsets.
  - Create a needs assessment to map out where the campaign is and where the team would like it to be. Ask what needs to be done and who can do it.
- If your volunteers or members benefit from having more structured roles, consider giving interested new members an application to fill out. This will ensure that new members are dedicated in joining and can give a picture of where their interests and skills lie.
  - Understanding people's interests and strengths can ensure that members are working in the capacity that will best serve the campaign, and that will keep them interested and engaged for longer.
- **Joe, a congregations expert in Claremont**, highlights the importance of recognizing that all people are going to have different strengths and in order to organize most effectively, people joining the campaign must be "met where they are at."
  - For example, one new volunteer may be very passionate about Fair Trade and they thrive explaining the concept at events, while another may prefer to use their skillset behind the scenes to run social media. Acknowledging these differences and letting people work in their preferred environment will allow people to put their best foot forward and make the campaign look great as well.

"People organize in ways that are most meaningful to them."

**Joan, Fair Trade LA**

## Put the Purpose First

### Focus on the goals of your campaign

- Campaigns are great places to gain experience but don't lose sight of what the campaign is working towards. Making sure the campaign focuses on the mission of Fair Trade instead of what individual people are doing can help ensure the longevity of the campaign.
- **Katherine from Chicago Fair Trade** also emphasized the importance of avoiding "founder syndrome" where the campaign is synonymous to the person running it.
  - Founder syndrome can make it harder to continue on with the campaign if the "founder" ever has to step down.
- Sharing responsibilities will also make for a more responsive and aware team, lessening the need for having one figurehead.

### Founder Syndrome

**When a single individual is responsible for all decisions and therefore becomes synonymous with the campaign.**

Sharing responsibilities and avoiding founder syndrome will make your organization seem more approachable to those looking to get involved.

People are more likely to want to get involved if they feel like their voice will be heard.

If one figurehead does not share the responsibility, the campaign will be difficult to maintain because others have not been exposed to how the campaign runs.

## There's No Need to Reinvent the Wheel

### Make it easy for people to carry on your work

- In order to make leadership transitions as smooth as possible, Katherine recommends institutionalizing systems and practices whenever possible. Start simply by writing things down!
  - Things such as meeting minutes, reports from past events, and contacts for other campaigns and organizations can give new leaders a framework for the position that they are stepping into.
- Make sure multiple people on your committee have access to and know how to manage the systems you use, such as the campaign's email or social media accounts. Also be sure to introduce other committee members to any important contacts, from a city council representative to vendors used for annual events.
  - Create a general email account for your campaign that multiple committee members can access and manage. Be sure to check this account regularly!
- **Emily from Media, PA**, points out the importance of job shadowing in times of transition. What better way to pass on the torch than to show the new person some tips and tricks? This gives some guidelines and structure to the position so it's easy for anyone to take on the job without recreating the position from scratch.
- Are there resources within the community that can benefit your campaign? Similar to taking advantage of resources from Fair Trade Campaigns, some campaigns may find advantageous partnerships in other organizations to create a sustainable network.
  - **Kendra from Fair Trade Houston** has found success in aligning with existing anti-human trafficking efforts in the city. Highlighting how Fair Trade addresses this issue helps the campaign recruit volunteers and gain traction.

### Why Institutionalize?

Institutionalizing is a great method to ensure that your campaign lives past your current team. Giving everyone as much information as possible makes carrying on the organization seem like a less daunting task!

### Additional Resources

- [Campaigners' Guide: Sustainable Leadership](#) – Fair Trade Campaigns
- [Sustainable Leadership 101: Build Your Team](#) – Fair Trade Campaigns
- [Strategic Volunteer Engagement: A Guide for Nonprofit and Public Sector Leaders](#) – ALIVE
- [Basics of Managing Volunteers](#) – Volunteer Maine
- [Volunteer Management Practices and Retention of Volunteers](#) – Urban Institute
- [The Seven Principles of Sustainable Leadership](#) - ASCD

### Questions?

You can find more tools and resources in Fair Trade Campaigns' resource library at [fairtradecampaigns.org/resources](http://fairtradecampaigns.org/resources), or send an email to [admin@fairtradecampaigns.org](mailto:admin@fairtradecampaigns.org).