

CHAMPION CHECKLIST

How Can We Influence Others To Support A Cause?

“There’s not a funder in the world who can create the change they seek alone.”

That reality, voiced by one foundation leader, underscores a special role that people who work in philanthropy don’t tend to call out but are often called on to play: to be a champion of the grantees they support and the causes they care about. How can you mobilize others to get behind good ideas?

It takes practices—at least four of them. Based on our research, workshops and consultation with hundreds of practitioners, we’ve identified four practices that effective champions use to bring more FANS to their cause: Framing (using ideas for influence), Asking (using inquiry for influence), Networking (using connections for influence), and Storytelling (using emotions for influence).

This Pretty Good Tool is designed to help you work on these four practices and sharpen your strategy. What’s the big idea? Can you name names? What if you think in terms of many-to-many? How is your cause an evolving story? We’ve observed that when practitioners apply the questions in this tool to a cause or grantee they’re passionate about, they come up with good strategies and discover that they’re naturals at influence. We hope it will have the same effect and help you master the practice of champions.

Check out the tool on the next page. Read the annotations that follow the tool for ideas on how to use it. Adapt the tool to fit your needs. Give it a try.

Champion Checklist

How Can We Influence Others To Support A Cause?

First, choose your cause.

Your cause could be an issue, campaign, idea, partner or program.

What is the cause you want to champion? Why does it need a champion?

Why is your cause mission-critical to your organization? Why is it important to you?

Next, use these questions to sharpen your strategy and work on four practices that will bring more FANS to your cause: Framing, Asking, Networking, Storytelling.



Framing

Using Ideas for Influence

1. How can you frame your cause in terms of **one big idea**? Draft an idea, then think about how you can make it simpler and stronger.
2. What are **different ways** of framing your cause? List any positive as well as negative interpretations you can think of.



Asking

Using Inquiry for Influence

3. What **people** do you want to influence and why? Begin to name names, toward a “List of 100.” Think about the best ways to segment them. Think about what you want to know about them.
4. What hunches do you have about the **sparks** of support these people might have for your cause? What upcoming opportunities could you use to fan the flames?



Networking

Using Connections for Influence

5. What **conversations** related to your cause do you want to start, inform, learn from, accelerate, and/or redirect?
6. Who are **ambassadors** you can engage and equip to be champions of your cause, and how will you do so?



Storytelling

Using Emotions for Influence

7. What **happened** that led you to care about the cause and decide to be its champion? List anything that applies—a specific event, conversation, experience, reading, etc.
8. How can you present your cause as an **evolving story**? What evolutions is your cause in the midst of right now?

Champion Checklist

How Can We Influence Others To Support A Cause?

First, choose your cause.

Your cause could be an issue, campaign, idea, partner or program.

Thinking about this question will help you be a more strategic champion.

What is the cause you want to champion? Why does it need a champion?

Your passion is critical to your persuasion. Remember the saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Why is your cause mission-critical to your organization? Why is it important to you?

Next, use these questions to sharpen your strategy and work on four practices that will bring more FANS to your cause: Framing, Asking, Networking, Storytelling.

Framing *Using Ideas for Influence*

1. How can you frame your cause in terms of **one big idea**? Draft an idea, then think about how you can make it simpler and stronger.

2. What are **different ways** of framing your cause? List any positive as well as negative interpretations you can think of.

Think of your big idea as creating the best possible door to a fuller conversation with the people you're trying to reach. Why should they open that door? Try to get to simplicity on the right side of complexity.

This exercise can help you think flexibly about ways of talking about your cause. It can also help you get into the mind of people you're trying to influence—and out of yours.



Asking

Using *Inquiry* for Influence

3. What **people** do you want to influence and why? Begin to name names, toward a "List of 100." Think about the best ways to segment them. Think about what you want to know about them.

Naming names can be so helpful. Some people who do this exercise end up realizing they only need to reach a small number of people, leading to a sharper, more focused influence strategy. Creating a "List of 100" (or 75 or 50 or 10) can help you engage an inner circle of ambassadors as well.

4. What hunches do you have about the **sparks** of support these people might have for your cause? What upcoming opportunities could you use to fan the flames?

Influence is ultimately an adaptive, opportunistic, test-and-learn enterprise.



Networking

Using *Connections* for Influence

5. What **conversations** related to your cause do you want to start, inform, learn from, accelerate, and/or redirect?

We often think about influence in terms of advertising campaigns and broadcast communications (one-to-many). But being an effective champion is more likely to happen through networks and relationships (many-to-many).

6. Who are **ambassadors** you can engage and equip to be champions of your cause, and how will you do so?

There's an old saying about communications: The goal is not to get more people to *hear* your story. It is to get more people to *tell* your story.



Storytelling

Using *Emotions* for Influence

7. What **happened** that led you to care about the cause and decide to be its champion? List anything that applies—a specific event, conversation, experience, reading, etc.

Caring is contagious, especially when you can tell a story that shows *why* you care.

8. How can you present your cause as an **evolving story**? What evolutions is your cause in the midst of right now?

Change engages. Talking about how your cause is evolving can make for a dynamic narrative and give your effort to champion it a sense of momentum.