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October 2016

Michael Jacoby Brown
training & coaching

*Helping organizations achieve their goals
through recruiting and motivating others*

Organizer's Edge ▶

Back to Basics: Building Power One By One

When I started out organizing, I had specific targets of how many one on ones I had to do each week. I had quotas of door knocking: how many doors and often how much money I had to raise each month. Although occasionally it had its problems (like when I got a commitment from the priest in a Catholic Church to pay \$500 (and this was 35 years, when \$500 was real money) and the Director complained about my lack of fund-raising that month). Whatever other problems the organization had (and there were plenty) these numbers provided a framework and foundation for organizing for power.



Today, too often I see organizers and supervisors lacking this kind of accountability. To build power we are going to have to get many people to join our organizations. And to do that organizers have to build relationships with them. The old mantra, "Power comes from organized money and/or organized people" still makes sense today. Organizations that want the power without holding their organizers to specific numbers of one on ones will not build much power.

If anyone has a better method and theory of building power, I would love to hear it. Staff organizers still need to be doing 10 (or some specific number they are held accountable to) one on ones a week. Unless you have so many active members and are spending so much time with them to

develop them, there is no reason not to do the one on ones. And if an organizer does not reach ten a week, then they still need a serious goal. (People will cancel: cars will break down, people won't show - I know stuff happens in the real world that can make this tough.)

But organizers, and their supervisors, need to ask themselves: What are we doing that is more important? What are we doing that is building power more than doing the one on ones?

For Fundraising Too.. .

The one on ones are also key to raising money. People give to those they are in relationship ship. In ***Relational Judaism***, Rabbi Ron Wolfson quotes a Board member of a major institution when someone applied for the President's job. "If you want to be President...you have to be prepared for at least 20 meals a week with donors..." Same goes for organizing: building people power and money power. You have to build those relationships: There is no substitute for the face to face meeting. And having a meal only makes it stronger. If your organization is fortunate enough to have staff and the staff are not doing their one on ones, when what are they doing that is more important?

Feedback Welcome

We want to hear from you, your reactions, ideas, what is at the edge YOUR "envelope." Just go to...

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Michael Jacoby Brown Story

Who else you will hear from.....

We are just starting, but so far you can expect to hear what the following people are thinking:

Jessica Tang: Boston Teachers Union, AFT

George Luse of the Mass Teachers Assn,

Scott Reed with the PICO Network, ,

Cathy Howell, in Oregon and El Salvador, formerly with the AFL-CIO,

Caesar McDowell of the Interaction Institute for Social Justice,

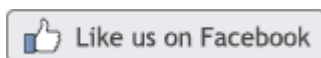
Diana Bell of Community and Labor United,

David Hernandez of the California Education Assn,
Attica Scott, running for State Rep in Louisville,
Bob Van Meter with the Local Initiative Support Corporation in Boston,
Walter Davis, of the Tennessee, Health Care Coalition.
Debra Askenase, of Community Organizing 2.0,
Deb Fastino, of the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford, MA,
Rebecca Gutman, with SEIU-1199,
Tim Dean, of SEIU-1199,
Mary Ochs, long time organizer in Los Angeles
and others, hopefully, including YOU

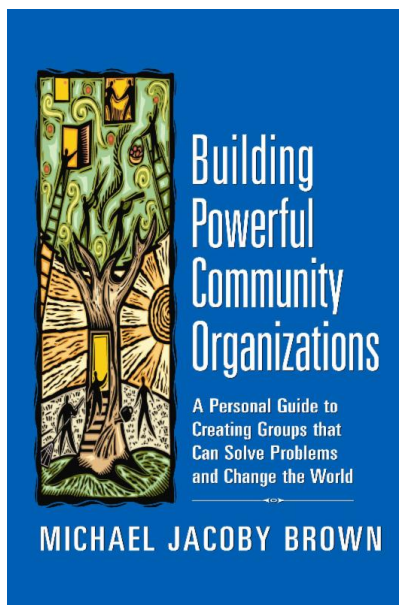
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