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October 2013 Organizers Edge Newsletter

**Organizer's Edge** 

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October 17, 2013

**From: Michael Jacoby Brown****Transformational Leadership in Action**

Community organizers focus on people and organizations. This month we are blessed to have the wisdom of two veteran organizers.

**Jennifer Coken** of US Action shows us her "edge" in how she relates to people. Paying attention to people, treating them with respect and developing their leadership is transformational leadership. It both builds new leaders and strengthens organizations.

**Roger Newell** shows us how to conduct a **SMART** grassroots campaign that can build an organization. Organizations that win real improvements in people's lives gain members and credibility. **SMART** campaigns are also part of transformational leadership. They transform organizations and build power by showing how organizing makes a real difference in people's lives.

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**Jennifer Coken**[View our profile on !\[\]\(3342c215b2a8b663596a81468d5dc314\_img.jpg\)](#)

Jennifer has spent 25 years as a political and legislative strategist running campaigns at the federal, state and local levels, and as a visionary entrepreneur starting non-profit organizations and raising millions of dollars through grant-writing and corporate sponsorship programs for nearly 50 organizations. Jennifer has worked for the Public Interest



Research Groups, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Congressional Hunger Center, the Gore Lieberman Campaign, the Virginia Statehouse Caucus and an additional 40+ clients working on issue and electoral campaigns. She was one of the founders of Hands on DC, and assisted with the creation of the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center.

From

## **Jennifer Coken, One Organizer's "Edge"**

People often ask me how come I'm so good at remembering people's names, "What's your trick?" they ask, assuming I'll tell them that I repeat the person's name three times during our

conversation.

Truth is, I don't have one.

I'm genuinely curious and interested in other people. I didn't come by this naturally however. When I was a kid I was pretty self-conscious because I was always the tallest girl in my class (5'7" by the 9th grade) and literally stuck out like a sore thumb. I put myself at ease by getting to know the people around me. I figured that if we knew each other better, maybe I'd get teased less. That philosophy didn't work but found a love for people and what made them tick.

As an organizer, one of our greatest assets is the people around us and the connections we make. [Read on...](#)



**Roger Newell**, Chair, DC Jobs with Justice, Winning Campaigns

*Long time organizer, Roger Newell, currently works for the Teamsters and serves as chair of Washington, DC Jobs with Justice. Newell, a DC native, is a graduate of Columbia University and has worked for the AFT and also serves on the Board of the National Organizers Alliance.*

From: Roger Newell:

## **Winning Campaigns**

Organizers---Don't you wish that you had a crystal ball that would allow you to see if a campaign was going to be successful?

Well, while there is no crystal ball that I know of in use in the organizing

community, there is a quick matrix that can be applied to potential campaigns to help increase your chances of winning.

Your campaigns should be **SMART!**

That means, they should be:

**S**---Specific/While we all want to change the world, your campaign should be focused on a specific objective.

**M**---Measurable/Your campaign plan should have both interim and terminal goals. Meeting your interim goals allow you to determine if the campaign is growing and picking up speed.

**A**---Achievable/After reevaluating the available resources, your reach the conclusion that you do have the people, money, time, political backing, etc. to win the campaign.

**R**---Realistic/Your campaign must be built around the pulse beat of the community.

**T**---Time-Phased/Your campaign should start small and grow deeper and broader over a defined period of time.

Roger Newell  
Chair  
D.C. Jobs with Justice

[We want to hear from you, your reactions, ideas, YOUR edge of YOUR envelope. Just go to... http://michaeljacobybrown.com/contact/](http://michaeljacobybrown.com/contact/)

### **Who else you will hear from.....**

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

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,  
Cesar McDowell of the Interaction Institute for Social Justice,  
Diana Bell of Community and Labor United,  
David Hernandez of the California Education Assn,  
Linda Honold, of Wisconsin Voices  
Attica Scott, now an elected official in Louisville, KY,formerly with Jobs with Justice,  
Quinn Rallings in Alabama with the PICO Network,  
Bob Van Meter with the Local Initiative Support Corporation in Boston,  
Walter Davis, in Tennessee, of the National Organizers Alliance,  
Deb Askenase, of Community Organizing 2.0,  
Cherie Andes, of the Industrial Areas Foundation,  
Avi Green, with MassVote,  
Deb Fastino, of the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford, MA,  
Rebecca Gutman, with SEIU-1199,  
Tim Dean, of SEIU-1199,

Claudia Horwitz, of Stone Circles in North Carolina,  
Mary Ochs, long time organizer in Los Angeles  
and others, hopefully, including YOU

### Other Useful Links

<http://michaeljacobybrown.com/>

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