

Tips for Setting Good Objectives

Program Objective: What are you trying to do?

A well-defined program objective is THE MOST important component of a good plan. If the objective is too broad, the decisions made from this point on will be vague, virtually guaranteeing an ineffective campaign. Your objective is not your mission. Your objective is the next step in your overall plan for achieving your mission. Generally, objectives can be divided into three categories: behavior change, policy change (which can mean government or corporate policy) and fundraising.

“Stopping global climate change,” “saving the children” and “raising more money” are admirable and important endeavors, but they are too broad. Many things will have to happen to make these visions a reality. If you start with too broad an objective, you'll end up with an overly broad audience and vague messages. You need to hone into an objective that is **DOABLE and MEASURABLE over the next 12-24 months**. For instance:

Behavior Change Objective

Bad Example: *“Stopping global climate change”*

Better Example: *“Decrease SUV sales in Detroit by 25% by the end of 2017.”*

Policy Change Objective

Bad Example: *“Saving the Children”*

Better Example: *“Provide access to Pre-K for 50% of California’s children by fall of 2017.”*

Fundraising Objective

Bad Example: *“Raise more money”*

Better Example: *“Attract 100 new donors who each give at least \$50 by September 2017.”*

Evaluating the Objective

Write down your communications objective:

Is it a good objective? Use the following checklist to evaluate:

- | | YES | NO |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Is the objective doable and achievable in the next 12-24 months? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is there a clear audience target that makes this objective achievable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are there specific ways to measure your progress to let you know you’re headed in the right direction? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The answer to all these questions should be “Yes”. If not, go back and refine your objective.

More Examples of Good Objectives

“Implement a depression screening and suicide prevention day for freshman at 75% of Cape Cod’s High Schools by July 1, 2017.”

“Increase ticket sales for the Evening Series Concerts by 40% (approximately 100 tickets per show) by fall 2017.”

“Increase donations from faith communities to our annual fund by 5% over the previous year’s campaign.”