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Bring Back Nightingales to the BBC

Please support my petition to get the BBC to re-start its lost tradition of a live broadcast of Nightingales. Over a million people tuned in to the first broadcast back in 1924, and it became a much loved annual event up until the Second World War. Now nightingales are in steep decline due to multiple environmental threats and they need our support ! More at http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=344.

From ThreeWorlds

In case you've missed them, here 's some of what you can find at my blog http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/:

The Values Behind #nomakeupselfie
Explores the motivational values that may explain the hugely popular 'nomakeupselfie' phenomenon which swept Britain, if not anywhere else. http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=340

It was a primarily Prospector moment, very female and like *Stop Kony*, (http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?tag=kony) started growing among young users of social media. The blog identifies five major campaign lessons why it worked so well, including *"The Rule of Small"*, which especially apply to this Prospector audience.

Pat Dade at CDSM has given us a 'starfish diagram' of the top five Attributes from the CDSM motivational values system, most associated with *"Image Aware"*. (This also shows you the latest 2013 configuration of the UK values map).

UK Politics and Values – Beyond Class
One for political geeks.   http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=323 A breakdown of the relationship between values, political affinity (which parties people feel closest to), age and social class.

The Prospectors, and especially younger ones, emerge as the most likely deciders of forthcoming British Elections, deciding the battle between Labour and Conservative. Tories have less Pioneer and younger support than Labour but the Conservatives and UKIP are head to head over older voters, especially Settlers. Values appears to give a clearer differentiation than socio-economic group (class).

Updates our 2005 Values and Voters survey and contains links to intervening studies by CDSM, IPPR and others.

Pure values dog whistle: Daily Mail calls for overseas aid claw-back
Britain reeled from extreme flooding this winter. The mid-market *Daily Mail* used the opportunity to play politics along values lines. http://threeworlds.campaignstrategy.org/?p=323

Here I show the values of *Mail* core readers (eg the importance of Power Over Others and Material Wealth, highly rated by Golden Dreamers and Brave New Worlds), and relate them to its call to claw back overseas aid to finance the restitution of flooded British living rooms.

The Mail's 'dog whistle' caused problems for the ruling Conservative Party and an immediate outbreak of Pioneer-based denouncements from NGOs. The blog suggests how they could play to the values rather than against them – maybe next time.

Other Things
- A how-to guide: public relations for charities on a shoestring budget http://gu.com/p/3nnhq/tw Words of wisdom from David Hamilton
- Let there be light! http://solar-aid.org/thanks-a-million Solar Aid sells its millionth solar light in Africa. Not bad. Well done Jeremy Leggett et al. Who says small things can't make a difference?
- Norway's sovereign wealth fund has been instructed to invest in renewable energy http://po.st/IyIfYL
- #1 metro area in US for electric car growth is no longer in California : TreeHugger http://t.co/fna8Q3Mvdm
- Man hit by wind-blown NHS sign that asks "under the weather?" http://ind.pn/1gEv1QL (Thanks to Ed Gyde).
- midwayfilm.com/ beautiful
- WWF research points to a "a significant, long-term decline in business flying" http://buff.ly/1g7BVCh
- Any campaigner should read this. Under the influence. http://t.co/Z33Knozdb6 a story of how the alcohol lobby works – from the British Medical journal.
- Leonardo DiCaprio forms electric car racing team http://t.co/71PMlsI9vQ - a great idea

My Theory of Change
The honest truth is that I don't really have a 'theory of change', indeed I try to avoid the term. This is for the same reason that I try to avoid 'message': a debate about which is the right 'message', or which is the right 'theory of change', tends to make you go in circles. So my theory about theories of change, is that organisations or groups, or more depressingly, individuals, who spend time looking for the right theory of change, are probably wasting their time.

This of course excludes academics who teach or study theories of change. For them it is a necessity. After all, history would be awfully dull without the possibility of attribution error. Likewise, the companies who make a business of selling 'Theories of Change' as methods. You can find them via Google, although other search engines are available.

For "message" I suggest looking at components of communication that can be assessed more precisely and objectively – eg CAMPCAT. This is because when it comes to the sort of communication assumed by the term 'message' in change-seeking discussions, the important factors concern effectiveness, and the important factors are those which you can plan, control or at least influence, and most of those are not 'the message' itself.

There are endless 'theories of change' and the more general ones are the sorts of things Aristotle and Plato may have argued about. Does change come when elites lead, or when the masses move ?

Unless the purpose or other context is more specific – for instance https://www.sfcg.org/ Documents/dmechapter2.pdf on peace-making – the grander theories of change are not really applicable to campaigns. The useful literature about change, including 'theories of change' used in a pragmatically wide way, is vast. For example this by my friends at Fairsay: http://fairsay.com/blog/ 2011/an-ecampaigning-reading-list?searchterm=theory+of+change

But if I did have a theory of change for campaigns it might be a bit like this: these things will help.

1. Experiment, test, learn, improve
2. Apply the learnings of others about what works
3. Do both of the above
4. Create a body of practice that works for your group or for you
5. Build a campaign around a Critical Path and ground-truth test it
6. Define your communications strategy (audiences, actions) from the Critical Path
7. Find your critical path by issue mapping to locate a single significant change
8. Create a relationship of trust so people can support the campaign 'on trust'

1. A campaigner or campaign organisation which **learns from experiment and empirical testing**, seeing what works and what does not, and trying to objectively measure or detect that, experiment and change it and observe the outcome, is more likely to succeed over time than one that does not. Break down your campaigns into testable bits: monitor, evaluate, analyse, improve and try again, like Dave Brailsfords incremental gains in cycling. But remember the "10,000 hour rule" – it takes time to get really good at campaigns, no matter how good the planning or theory, as it's also about skills and team building.

   A campaigner or campaign organisation which **applies the learnings of others** about what works more often than it does not (eg heuristics, motivational values, framing), is more likely to succeed over time than one that does not.

2. This might sound like a statement of the obvious but campaign groups are often to be found repeating the same mistakes over and over. They try and try again, which is a requirement for #1 but for many reasons, which may include being very intuitive, ethically driven and otherwise mission focused and prone to the commitment effect, and indeed the influence of 'theories of change' which hold that they are part of an insurgent uprising against overwhelming forces, they learn nothing from failure. Rather it is taken as a validation that they are on the true right course.

   Others do #2 and can become besotted with one methodology to the point that like the proverbial man with just a hammer, 'every problem looks like a nail'. So my next point would be:

3. A campaigner or organisation which does 1# *and* 2# will tend to be more successful than if s/he or it does only one of those things, or neither.

4. Rather than a theory of change, an organisation needs to establish **a body of practice** that works, and to identify its *best tactic*, and then build its strategies around that. (A Strategy of Tactical Positioning, as suggested by Sun Tzu, who was quite good at this sort of thing, and is discussed along with the rest of these points in my book *How to Win Campaigns: Communications for Change*). This is because many of the learnings gleaned from general theory may not apply to the culture and social situation of the organisation (or individual).

Moreover, the assets and resources needed to get really good at one thing, may preclude being really good at others: there are many zero sum games. This limitation really helps clear and effective decision-making.

5. Campaigns built around a **Critical Path** of changes where one thing needs to happen, in order to make the next happen, leading to a single detectable final objective of change, are more likely to work than those without such a path.   Making such a path requires testing assumptions by research: ground-truthing it and testing assumptions. This reduces the wickedness of problems.

6. **Define audiences and changes** from the Critical Path steps, (eg in terms of power, influence and control and necessary actions, ie behaviours) which makes it possible to apply general learnings and methodologies in an effective way. For example: applying framing-research or motivational-values techniques. Here you can make testable theories, for example showing X to audience A will make them more likely to do Y, eg in qualitative research. This creates your instrumental **Communication Strategy**.

7. **Finding a Critical Path** requires understanding where a **single change can have significant results**, ie to change the issue at a point of intervention. This requires understanding the issue, not just as it is seen in other contexts (eg by the media, or in politics or academics or by other specific audiences) but in terms of actors and power and control and processes which inhibit or cause change now, and identifying possible interventions which themselves may change those (meaning that the actors involved may not even be aware of each other at present).   This requires situation or issue mapping, which identifies what is known, and what needs to be researched, in order to find possible new interventions. As a rule, the more maps of the same issue are made by groups of people with different expertise, the more new possibilities will emerge. Campaign planners need to be *intelligencers*: to acquire and utilise intelligence about the relevant situation.

8. Campaigns are not **generally** required where money or power can deliver the desired change but only where public opinion and actions are needed to **focus support and influence**. Such influence is a weak force, unless focused, and unstable. Therefore it is generally in deficit, making it costly to focus, and so limiting opportunities to apply it. A narrow focus is therefore required which prevents campaigns from being truly educational: they cannot work by explaining 'the issue' as it is usually 'wicked'. Moreover the campaign plan cannot usually be the public story but has to be taken on trust. This in turn requires a **relationship of trust** built between the campaign brand and its followers, and the public supporters, and within the campaign community.

Finally, campaigns are a form of public politics, mostly operating outside formal politics. The boundary between the two is complex and contested – see for example the recent UK debates about the 'Gagging Law' which may restrict NGO campaigning in the months before an election. At root, that controversy is about representation in political life – do people have a right to organise and represent themselves to exert influence over how their society works, or is this something that only the formal political class have the right to do? In that case, the freedoms of NGOs have become entangled (http://tomburke.co.uk/2013/10/14/opening-statement-of-mr-tom-burke-cbe-to-the-independent-commission-on-civil-society-and-democratic-engagement/) in the same issue that faced attempts to organise labour in the Nineteenth Century. This question of contested legitimacy is one that will face the "voluntary sector" in many countries.

Sometimes campaigns lead and initiate political change, especially where politics becomes a fight for 'the middle ground', focused on fewer and fewer 'issues'. By excluding other public concerns, such politics positively encourages the emergence of campaigns that address those 'issues'.

The trend to politicians believing, or pretending to believe, that the public interest can always be best served by leaving as much as possible to the private sector, ie 'the market', is motivated by a desire to be 'business friendly', attract investment and promote economic growth.

This has two major effects on the context for campaigns. On the one hand it opens the way for campaign groups to exert more influence than before, by focusing consumer opinion and action on sensitive commercial interests (eg Greenpeace's consumer campaigns on tuna and palm oil): campaigns and business change then lead, create norms and standards, and politics follow up behind, sometimes eventually making the standards statutory. On the other, it further marginalises formal politics, and will tend to increase public trust in NGOs, and some businesses, while politicians appear less and less relevant.

Politicians show some signs of realising that they must reverse this process. Remarkably, China may be where the primacy of economic growth is most bluntly curtailed in the public interest, incentivised by the need to control air pollution. Problems like climate change require collaboration and cooperation that in turn need governance, and that cannot be delivered by a free market alone.

The media exerts a simplifying effect on this political-social-campaign interaction because it also focuses attention, especially its own. News media seeks out the biggest actor or loudest voice – a single actor bias – to tell a story. It has room for only one global threat at a time, and rationalises the downplaying of others in the same way that an individual is susceptible to single-action bias. Devices such as filters that identify what is 'trending' on twitter, and public opinion polls that identify a 'no.1 concern', exert a similar effect.

These interactions are too complex to be captured in any single 'theory of change' but for practical purposes, campaign groups can develop a model of achieving change that works best for them, taking into account their culture, community, brand, ambitions and the situations they face. I don't guarantee that following my steps will lead to success but it might help tip the odds in your favour.

If it helps, I've put a pdf of an Outline Campaign Development Plan here, taken from *How to Win Campaigns*.