MobileActive.org

Cell phones for civic engagement.

STRATEGY GUIDE #2
USING MOBILE PHONES IN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

by Michael Stein
Edited by Katrin Verclas

Mobile**Active**

is a project of Green Media Toolshed and NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network.

About the MobileActive.org Strategy Guide Series

MobileActive is a global community of strategists, activists, and technologists who are using mobile phones in their social change work. This series of Strategy Guides examines the effectiveness of nonprofits using mobile phones to build their constituent lists, influence political causes, and raise money. Our goal is to aggregate strategies, case studies and lessons learned as a means to encourage the adoption of mobile phones use by nonprofits.

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MobileActive is directed by Martin Kearns of Green Media Toolshed who is the catalyst and inspiration behind MobileActive; and by Katrin Verclas.

This series of **MobileActive** Strategy Guides is supported with a grant from the Surdna Foundation.

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Contents

MOBILE PHONES IN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

It was a busy summer for Greenpeace Argentina in Buenos Aires in 2005 as campaigners fanned around the city of three million inhabitants to build support for their "Zero Waste" campaign. The law aims to dramatically reduce urban waste over the next 25 years. Their target was the Buenos Aires city council which has legislative power to shape waste management policies. Greenpeace's greatest campaign asset is local concerned citizens, but now they have added a new weapon in their arsenal of mobilization tools – the mobile phone. More than 4,500 "movile activistas" in Buenos Aires enrolled their mobiles to receive text alerts from Greenpeace at critical phases in the "Zero Waste" campaign, asking them to phone or visit local legislators and elected politicians to advocate on behalf of the waste reduction campaign.

Mobile activists sent SMS text messages to legislators and key players involved in the bill's various hearings, and SMS text messages were used to arrange spontaneous meetings and demonstrations. After 15 months of campaigning, local residents won their "Zero Waste" campaign in late 2005, heralding a future with less landfill use, more recycling, and no waste incinerators

ARE MOBILE PHONES RIGHT FOR YOU ?

➔ Read case studies from other organizations, participate in live mobile campaigns to see how it works, connect with mobile vendors to learn about tools and costs, and discuss strategy with other mobile phone campaigners at **Mobile**Active**.org**

in one of the world's largest cities. Greenpeace Argentina also demonstrated a future for the use of mobile phones as a vital mobilization tool in which mobile activism is used as the primary tool to achieve a goal.[1]

In many countries around the world – particularly in developing countries – mobile phones are the easiest and least expensive way to get a phone

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1: The campaign won a coveted 160Character Award given to innovative uses of mobile technology for industry and civic society.

160characters.org/news.php?action=view&nid=2035

WHY ARE MOBILE PHONES USEFUL FOR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS?

• Speed is a critical aspect of advocacy campaigns, and mobile phones allow the rapid dissemination of messages to a network of supporters with specific calls to action. Mobile phone activists can quickly sign on to petitions and get involved in other activities, cutting the response time down to a few hours. Email response time can take several days.

• For broad-based advocacy and outreach capaigns, in many countries (particularly in the developing world) mobile phones are in widespread use and more commonly used than the Internet, so they offer a means to reach a broad constituency of citizens.

• Young people attracted to advocacy campaigns are very comfortable using mobile phones and text messaging, in particular.

line, and are far more pervasive than the Internet as a means of communication. With an estimated 3.5 billion mobile phones in use around the world at the time of this writing, they are ubiquitous. There is a relatively low learning curve to using a mobile phone, making it far more accessible than computers to a wider range of constituents. As a highly personal means of communication, mobiles reach target constituencies directly and immediately and are therefore conducive to instant participation and response — hallmarks of advocacy campaigns. Furthermore, mobiles are small and highly portable, and are hence accessible when on the move and in less secure environments. Finally, mobiles are flexible and rapidly evolving communications tools with varied content and convergence with other media such as email, websites, video, sound, and instant messaging, and offer a wide range of options for delivering advocacy messages to interested participants.

We've observed the use of mobile phones in a wide variety of advocacy campaigns around the world, and have been impressed by the creativity that non-governmental organizations have shown when integrating text messaging and ringtones into their organizing efforts. Whether it's a petition gathering campaign in the U.K. to ban seal hunting, or efforts by Greenpeace in Buenos Aires to adopt changes in solid waste management for the city, efforts by activists to disseminate

pro-democracy information to rural areas of Zimbabwe, or coordinating street protests in New York City at the Republican National Convention in 2004, each one of these has found a way to make mobile phone an integral part of the campaign.

ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

➔ Advocacy campaigns conducted by non governmental organizations are one arena where mobile phones have made an impact. We define advocacy campaigns as "an organized effort to influence public opinion; advocate for or against a government or industry policy or position; and mobilize stakeholders to take some kind of specific action that aids the outcome of a campaign such as signing a petition, making a phone call, sending a letter, or attending an event".

A lot has been learned about the characteristics of successful advocacy campaigns that integrate mobile phones, and we share those findings in this **MobileActive** Strategy Guide, one of a series of guides devoted to the use of mobile phones in civil society campaigns.

• Mobile phones can be used in highly targeted ways to recruit supporters by using specific venues such as concerts, rallies and events with the help of on-stage announcements, flyers, and handbills.

• Mobile phone text messaging allows an organization to deliver a summary of a 'call to action' on the small mobile phone screen, and then invite further contact via the Web or email.

• Mobile phone follow-up communication allows an advocacy organization to recruit participants as permanent supporters.

MOBILE ADVOCACY CASE STUDIES

Advocacy campaigns organized by non-governmental organizations are a unique social and cultural artifact of civil society. They represent an effort by a defined group of individuals and institutions to either stand in opposition to or in support of some kind of government, legislative, or corporate policy. Present-day advocacy campaigns have sought to harness every communications channel at their disposal, including newspapers, television, radio, advertising, public service announcements, direct mail, and the Internet, in an effort to reach out to supporters and other interested individuals. Many advocacy campaigns hope to use specific mobilization events as a means to reach out to new supporters. Mobile phones are a new tool for advocacy campaigners, as they seek to reach new and existing supporters, provide new avenues for engagements, decrease response time, and provide novelty in how advocacy campaigns are conducted.

SOME IDEAS FOR MOBILE CAMPAIGNS

➔ **SMS:** Send up to 160 character text messages to the mobile phones of supporters.

➔ **Ringtones:** Offer politically-themed ringtone sounds for you or your callers to hear.

➔ **Short codes:** Use a six-digit "mobile short code" to recruit supporters at concerts and events.

➔ **Fundraising:** Raise money from supporters at concerts and events with your short code by charging instant donations to their phone bill.

➔ **Forward-to-a-Friend:** Encourage supporters to forward text messages, ringtones and short codes to friends and family.

In the United Kingdom, major national campaigns to protest seal hunting and control nuclear weapons have have strategically used mobile phones. **The International Fund for Animal Welfare** (IFAW) launched a campaign in Spring 2006 across the U.K. to create a popular groundswell against the Canadian practice of seal hunting. The campaign used a variety of outreach channels, including traditional advertising in magazines, newspapers and public transit rail stations in London, online (http://www.stopthesealhunt.com), and via mobile phones. The campaign strategy focused on mobilizing as many people as possible in one month to petition the Canadian government on a bill to stop the practice of seal hunting. The campaign messaging included a five-digit mobile short code that allowed individuals to opt-in to the petition. Over 50,000 people participated in the mobile petition gathering campaign. After an individual had texted in to the short code, 93% responded to a follow-up request for their name, 68% provided their email, and 13% visited the campaign website, providing useful initial benchmarks for campaigns of this type.

Again in the United Kingdom, **Oxfam** spearheaded an effort in June 2005 to mobilize rallies at the G8 Summit in Edinburgh, Scotland, which made extensive use of mobile phone text messaging to keep campaigners informed about the latest news from rallies. At the Summit, over 100,000 supporters formed a human white band around Edinburgh to demand trade justice, debt cancellation and more aid for the world's poorest countries, kicking off a week of activities for the Make Poverty History campaign directed at the G8 world leaders.

Oxfam used text messaging to alert supporters of Summit news, indicating when and where to congregate. Karina Brisby, Oxfam's Interactive Media Campaigner says: "Offering text alerts

DATA AT A GLANCE

➜ During the **International Fund for Animal Welfare's** Spring 2006 petition campaign to ban seal hunting in Canada, over 50,000 people signed up via mobile phone. After an individual has texted in to the short code, 93% responded to a follow-up request for their name, 68% provided their email, and 13% visited the campaign website.

allowed Oxfam to keep supporters up-to-date in real time. With so many people expected throughout the week, it offered another way to organize people. The G8 event in 2005 helped us build up our database of supporters that were interested in text messaging. Two percent of our UK members have now opted in to receive SMS text messages from us. It's not a huge number, but it's a start, and we're learning things each time we do it."

Another SMS campaign by **Oxfam UK** in April 2006 provided additional data. The organization contacted 2,000 supporters via SMS text message to recruit volunteers to help write content about local events for their website. 10% responded back, providing their email address for follow-up. "I was expecting about half that many people to respond," reflects Karina Brisby. "People's responses can be pretty impulsive. In this case, we made a very personal appeal for assistance that didn't involve money or making a phone call."

Summarizing her lessons learned over the past few years, Brisby noted:

• Send a text message follow-up at the end of each mobilization campaign, inviting supporters to receive future email and mobile updates on Oxfam campaign activities.
• Remind people to forward your text message to a few friends.
• Text messaging copy must be very brief, and must engage, inform, and motivate all at the same time.
• Only send out text messages when you have a specific, actionable item to communicate.
• Consider carefully how you'll publicize your text messaging campaign, because people participate very impulsively. For example, publicity should reach people when they're likely to have their mobile phone in easy reach, and where there's adequate reception to send a text message.

"Offering SMS text alerts allows Oxfam to keep supporters up-to-date in real time. We've used it during events and rallies to direct people and crowds to specific locations. We've also seen our supporters forward our text alerts to their friends. The trickiest thing with text messaging is the copywriting, since it's so brief. The copy must engage, inform, and motivate all at the same time. We only send out text messages when we have a specific, actionable item to communicate."

— Karina Brisby,
Interactive Media Campaigner, Oxfam UK

OXFAM

➜ Oxfam is a development, advocacy and relief agency working to put an end to poverty world-wide. Oxfam believes that poverty is not inevitable: it can be tackled, and must be ended. ➜ **www.oxfam.org.uk**

MOBILE ADVOCACY
CAMPAIGN COSTS

Costs to deploy and operate mobile advocacy campaigns can vary considerably from country to country depending on factors such as fees charged by mobile phone carriers, and the services offered by specialized vendors to set up a campaign and support the organization in its efforts.

Here are the types of costs that an organization can expect to incur:

➔ **Licensing a mobile phone platform**: Gaining access to the technology tools to operate a mobile advocacy campaign is usually done through a contract with a specialized vendor. Vendors usually charge setup and monthly fees to consult with the organization to craft the campaign strategy, set up the platform to fit the specific needs of the organization, and manage the outbound and inbound mobile messaging campaigns. Included in this licensing is usually a shared or non-shared "mobile shortcode" which the organization will use to promote the campaign.

➔ **Message transaction fees**: Once the mobile advocacy campaign is up and running, the organization will incur per-message fees for sending and receiving mobile SMS messages. The per-message cost will be vary depending on volume, and carrier pricing policies in the country of operation.

➔ **Fundraising transaction fees**: If the organization plans to use its mobile campaign to fundraise from supporters, additional fees will apply based on the type of transactions and the country of operation. Currently, in most countries, carrier costs to operate mobile payment processing charged directly to a customer's mobile phone bill are very high, on the order of 30-50% of each transaction. Paypal Mobile operates an independent mobile payment processing system that bypasses the customer's mobile phone bill, but which requires the customer to have a Paypal Mobile account, which is a smaller population of users.

Visa recently struck a deal with the largest manufacturer of handsets, Nokia, launching a global system to use mobile phones as a payment system. Consumers are able to pay for purchases — and donations — by swiping a phone over a reader that electronically communicates with a microchip on the phone. Phone owners confirm the purchase with the push of a button and the deal is complete. This development will open up fundraising via mobile phones significantly, once this system is pervasively used, and holds significant promise for fundraisers to reach people 'just in time' when they are preceptive to a donation (when hearing an ad on the radio, seeing a moving print ad, etc) away from their computers.

➔ **Staff time for training, content development, and campaign management**: Do not underestimate the amount of staff time that needs to be dedicated for the effective deployment of a mobile advocacy campaign. The two key staff roles are campaign management which includes interacting with the vendor and developing content, and the various technology management tasks such as list management, integrating data with in-house databases, and reviewing mobile metrics with the vendor.

➔ **Building a custom mobile phone platform**: Recent software developments provide new options for NGOs (non-governmental organizations), especially smaller grassroots organizations.

One example is *FrontlineSMS* (www.frontlinesms.kiwanja.net), a software package developed by Kiwanja, a technology NGO based in the United Kingdom (www.kiwanja.net), which is designed to be an affordable, standalone "out-of-the-box" solution for small organizations, NGOs, and charities.

Developed initially for NGOs in Africa and first released in September 2005, the software is currently being tested in field trials by a number of national and international NGOs. FrontlineSMS and other similar "open source" mobile software applications offer the prospect of reduced vendor licensing and transactions costs, and are especially useful for smaller, more localized campaigns.

Activists in New York City integrated mobile phone text messaging as part of their street demonstrations coinciding with the **Republican National Convention** that took place in September 2004. Thought to be the first of its kind in the U.S., this experiment involved sending SMS messages from a central hub to alert local activists of routes that remained open to travel to protests outside Madison Square Garden, as the police blocked off large sections of the city. It also alerted independent journalists to where cameras were needed to document protests, legal aid lawyers to where legal aid was required for suspected rights violations, and finally where medical aid was required. While there were logistical and technical limitations to the system deployed during this event, it provided a valuable blueprint for community activists and organizers to understand what's possible to accomplish with mobile phones, and the requirements of future systems.

In Argentina, **Greenpeace** made use of mobile phones as part of their successful 2005 "Zero Waste" advocacy campaign in Buenos Aires to adopt changes in solid waste management for the city. Over 4,500 people signed up via mobile phone to participate in the campaign, which requires Buenos Aires to adopt a mandatory calendar to reduce the use of landfills, decrease waste by implementing recycling policies, ban

the use of incinerators, and give employment to informal workers that currently search trash bags on streets. Greenpeace used a variety of outreach channels to reach local residents, using the **Greenpeace Argentina** print magazine, posters, a website, flyers in public places — including restrooms — and with a strong word of mouth campaign amongst existing supporters.

A critical factor in the success of the campaign was consistently advertising the mobile short code, and activating their "movilactivistas" only at critical times with an immediate and direct ask for an action (in this case, suitably, a phone call) for maximum campaign impact. These efforts took place in dense urban settings and benefited from media coverage and access to a critical mass of potential activists. Advocacy campaigns can also make unique use of mobile phones in rural and more remote settings. Greenpeace Argentina worked with local indigenous Wichi people to track developer activity in the Pizarro Reserve rainforest in Argentina. Greenpeace provided mobile phones and training to allow Wichi participants to send text messages when developers prepared to clear land with bulldozers and other heavy equipment. "There are no telephone landlines in this part of Argentina to stay in contact if landowners are trying to destroy homes and forest," said Oscar Soria, Communications Director of Greenpeace Argentina.

GREENPEACE

➔ Greenpeace is the world's most effective environmental activist group dedicated to the issues of climate change, saving our ancient forests, stopping pollution, ending the nuclear threat, abolishing nuclear weapons, stopping genetic engineering, saving our oceans, and advocating sustainable trade.
➔ **www.greenpeace.org**

"We gave mobile phones to different leaders in the communities and used them to get messages from people." Once alerted to developer activity via SMS, activists could quickly travel to the designated areas to provide support.

NGOs in Africa have used SMS text messaging tools to span this vast continent to collect petition signatures in support of pan-African campaigns for human rights and social justice. In 2004, the U.K. and South Africa-based NGO **Fahamu** joined a coalition of human rights groups supporting ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Adopted by the African Union in 2003, this protocol protects a wide array of women's human rights, in some ways breaking new ground in international law—but needed to be ratified by 15 countries in the African Union to come into force. The campaign provided an opportunity to test whether SMS text messaging could be mobilized for a social justice campaign. While there were between 5-8 million Africans using email in January 2004, there were approximately 52 million mobile phone subscribers in Africa at the time. Growth in Africa has been particularly exponential; mobiles have not only leapfrogged the development of fixed-line telecommunications infrastructure in Africa, but also surged well beyond the Internet as a primary communications tool.

In coordination with coalition partners, Fahamu launched the signature campaign in July 2004, asking supporters to sign the Web-based petition, get friends and colleagues to sign, and for women's rights organizations to request related pamphlets to hand out in African Union countries. Mobile phone users could text in their signatures, and have them reflected on the online petition page. Fahamu staff developed software to handle incoming SMS text messages via a phone

number based in South Africa. Callers were instructed to text in messages in a standard format: the word 'petition,' followed by their name. The SMS messages were received as emails and then processed to extract the name and country from which they were sent.

FAHAMU

➔ Fahamu has a vision of the world where people organise to emancipate themselves from all forms of oppression, recognise their social responsibilities, respect each other's differences, and realise their full potential.
➔ **www.fahamu.org**

The petition collected 4,000 signatures, with 500 text messages — a relatively small number — from 29 African countries. The public relations campaign in conjunction with the petition contributed to the Protocol ratification in November 2005.[2]

Mobile phones can play an important role in helping organizers recruit supporters, particularly during mass mobilization events. We noted this point while discussing Oxfam's efforts during the G8 protests in Scotland. Campaigners in the
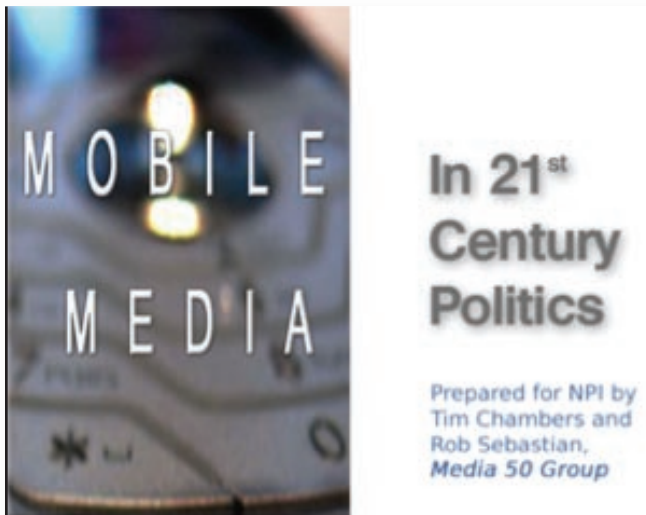
DATA AT A GLANCE

➔ **Oxfam UK** contacted 2,000 supporters via SMS text message in April 2006 to recruit volunteers to help write content about local events for their website. 10% responded back, providing their email address for follow-up. "I was expecting about half that many people to respond," reflects Karina Brisby, Interactive Media Campaigner with Oxfam UK. "People's responses can be pretty impulsive. In this case, we made a very personal appeal for assistance that didn't involve money or making a phone call."

United States who mobilized people for massive immigrant support rallies across the country during Spring 2006 attempted to take advantage of this as well.

The **SEIU** International Justice Campaign, focused on labor rights for immigrant workers, experimented with supporter recruitment via mobile phones. The strategy included handing out cards in both English and Spanish with a mobile short code to text to, and to get speakers to make announcements from the podium. "We had limited success," reflects Melissa Roy who helped organize this effort for the SEIU. "Our key lesson was that we needed to be crystal clear with what you're asking people to do, and find ways to repeat the appeal over and over."

MOBILE MEDIA

In 21st Century Politics

Prepared for NPI by
Tim Chambers and
Rob Sebastian,
Media 50 Group

It is noteworthy, however, that while advocacy organizations where not happy with their list building strategies using mobiles, the mass demonstrations were in fact, fueled by text messages spread among young people and activists. A recent report, *Mobile Media in 21st Century Politics* by the Media 50 Group, notes:

"Though the larger protests were organized in traditional fashion with unions, churches, Hispanic organizations, and Spanish language radio, there was a secondary theme to the protests that merits attention. Along with the massive protests, there were hundreds of smaller protest actions happening without the input of any centralized organization. They happened almost simultaneously across the nation and involved hundreds of cities and tens of thousands of mostly high school students, driven by Internet social networks and mobile text messaging.

Two quotes sum it up well:

From Chino, California -- "Cell phones were also instrumental, helping groups locate one another to form a larger presence. ... I think MySpace and cell phones played 95 percent in protest organizing all over California."
— Amos J. Young Jr., a former youth commissioner for Pomona County

From Phoenix, Arizona -- "[The school protests] likely marked the first appearance of a new generation of activists savvy about using electronic gadgets, text messaging and the Internet."
— Jay Pugao, Teacher at East Oakland Community High School

2: "Fahamu: Pan-African Text Messaging for Social Justice," by Emily Gertz, October 31, 2005.
http://worldchanging.com/archives/003694.html

While young activists mobilize, sparked by events at a moment in time, advocacy groups are still struggling with the mobile medium. A planned effort by SEIU Local 1199 Unit ed Healthcare Workers East which represents 275,000 members and retirees in New York, Maryland, the District of Columbia and Massachusetts, have put a planned texting campaign on hold pending an appropriate and urgent campaign theme. Comments Jed Alpert, who assists organizations with mobile campaign development through his company **PoliTxt**: "It's best not to launch a texting campaign without a serious, focused call to action on a particular issue."

Community organizers in the U.S. have shown creativity and media savvy in their use of mobile phones to promote campaigns. Building off the example of the grassroots ringtone campaign in the Philippines that helped expose electoral fraud during the 2004 presidential election, Eric Gundersen with Development Seed created several political ringtones to help expose government mismanagement during the Katrina hurricane. These first ringtones of its kind were widely covered in the media at MSN.com, Radio Free Europe, Washington Post, CNET, and others. Similarly, the popular music group They Might Be Giants released a ringtone in the U.S. in May 2006 to protest the United States National Security Agency's policies of domestic phone monitoring.

POLITXT / RIGHTS GROUP

➔ Rights Group builds and manages Mobile Action Networks: a powerful tool to reach your existing constituents and enlist new supporters—all on their most personal device. ➔ **www.rights-group.com**

SIX STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MOBILE ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

➔ **Step 1: Set goals and plan your mobile advocacy campaign.** Planning is your first step as you connect your mobile advocacy campaign to your existing real-world advocacy efforts. Bring together your team, communications, and technology to plan your effort, figure out your timing, craft a preliminary budget, and decide on who does what.

➔ **Step 2: Identify a vendor to run your mobile advocacy campaign.** Gaining access to the technology tools to operate a mobile advocacy campaign is usually done through a contract with a specialized vendor. Vendors usually charge setup and monthly fees to consult with the organization to craft the campaign strategy, set up the platform to fit the specific needs of the organization, and manage the outbound and inbound mobile messaging campaigns. Consider purchasing a shared or non-shared "mobile shortcode" which the organization will use to promote the campaign. For small grass-roots campaigns consider using one of the "open source" mobile software packages.

➔ **Step 3: Develop a marketing plan to reach your mobile constituency.** With your in-house staffing and vendor in place, you can begin work on a marketing plan to reach out to your supporters, allies, and partners, who in turn will help you make the most of opportunities to spread your mobile advocacy campaign far and wide. Ask: What are the goals of the mobile campaign? Who do you want to reach? With what messages and with what "ask"? How does your mobile campaign fit into your other marketing and outreach efforts?

➔ **Step 4: Craft the mechanics of your campaign and your mobile messaging steps.** Turn your marketing plan into reality by figuring out your messaging steps and the precise language for your campaign. Not only will you embed your mobile short code in your materials (on billboards, on your website, in emails, radio, TV, etc), but you'll decide what confirmation message to send back to people texting in, how to ask for email addresses, mailing address or phone numbers, and what frequency you'll use to send mobile campaign updates.

➔ **Step 5: Set up your system to get your mobile data into your in-house database.** Work with a vendor or tech support consultants or staff to define how you'll move mobile data such as mobile phone numbers, names, email addresses, and mailing addresses, into your database. Get your techies involved in this process so you're gathering the right information and storing it correctly for future use.

➔ **Step 6: Decide on your campaign closure and evaluation activities.** At some point your campaign will end and you'll want to create some closure messaging to thank people for their participation, report on campaign success, encourage ongoing engagement, and ask for additional personal information so you can keep them in your database. Conduct a metrics analysis session and campaign postmortem to assess the effectiveness of your mobile advocacy campaigns.

LESSONS LEARNED

Mobile phones are useful and creative tools that offer a broad variety of uses for national campaigns, street demonstrations, targeted political campaigns, and other forms of social action.

Here is a list of lessons learned about how best to use mobile phones in advocacy campaigns:

1 Understand your audience.

Understand the constituency (or audience) for your mobile campaign so that you can properly design your campaign and shape your messaging around them. Understand their use of mobile phones currently so you can set the right expectations about usage. Is your audience ready for a mobile phone campaign? If you're not sure, conduct a survey to learn more from them. What language should your mobile appeal go out in? What age group is your audience? How does your audience use mobile phones - text, call, web browsing?

2 Work with a Mobile Vendor.

To conduct an effective large-scale mobile advocacy campaign, you'll need to work with a mobile vendor who can help you with setup, implementation, list management, and understanding metrics. A vendor will help you set up a short code, customize the mobile software so you can ask follow-up questions to your opt-in participants, and will help you anticipate your costs. Furthermore, since you'll likely ask people that text in to your mobile short code to provide an email address so you can do email follow-up, the mobile vendor will help you export the list of email addresses so you can add them to your general database of supporters.

3 Plan your mobile strategy early.

Mobile phones are most effective in advocacy campaigns when they connect tightly with existing campaign strategies, thus offering new techniques for mobilization, education, and engagement. To enable this connection, discuss mobile strategies as early as possible during campaign planning, along with ways to use the Internet and other media.

4 Have a clear call to action.

Your mobile campaign must have a clear call to action. When using mobile messaging, make your campaign have a very specific and immediate "ask" so that your appeal will be compelling enough to get people to act immediately. This is probably the simple most important factor in getting a high mobile participation rate. Encourage participants to forward the text message to a few friends. Make sure your language is very clear and compelling. Test your messaging!

5 Identify your needs.

Mobile phone campaigns require coordinated media and public relations tie-in, which can incur additional costs, effort and planning to be successful. Add your mobile campaign to your checklist when talking PSA, advertising, and print designers for your campaign.

LESSONS
LEARNED (CONTINUED)

6 Get creative.

Get creative but remember that mobile activism is still a new medium that is thirsty for innovation. To engage your supporters, be open to experimentation and trials to understand what works best, but be respectful of the fact that many of your mobile signups may be new to text messaging or receiving automated text messages. Be open with your constituency that you're in a trial phase and need their support.

7 Gather as much data as possible.

When using mobile phones in advocacy campaigns, it's important to gather as much data as possible to understand what works and also to track your progress over time. A vendor can help you extract useful metrics and interpret what it means. What outreach activity generated the most opt-in text messages to your short code? How many people forwarded your message, visited your website, or provided their email?

8 Share your Data.

We are interested in establishing benchmarks for advocacy campaigns using the new mobile medium. Benchmarks may be hard to determine during the first trials of your mobile campaign, but will be useful going forward for budgeting and setting expectations. Benchmarks we are interested in are the number of people who will text your mobile short code, and the number of people who will provide follow-up information such as an email address. There is clearly a need for more sharing of benchmarks and mobile participation rates among early adopters of mobile activism tools and **MobileActive** will continue to gather data and results from mobile campaigns to establish benchmarks for advocacy campaigns using the mobile medium.