



Where Are Your Blind Spots?

Your strategy to wield influence and effect change may run into problems because of a crucial blind spot. A new report can help you see all your options more clearly.

For more than a decade, Spitfire Strategies has been helping public interest organizations design and implement successful communications campaigns. Along the way, Spitfire's founder and president, Kristen Grimm, has noticed an increasingly common problem: blind spots.

"Even organizations with highly sophisticated strategies often fail to consider how they will actually influence the audiences they need to reach in order to create their desired change," she writes in Spitfire's new report, *Want Influence? Eliminate Your Blind Spots*. Based on her experience, Grimm has identified the seven most common blind spots, and as you read the following excerpt from her report, it's worth asking: do any of these apply to you?



1. The Fast And Furious

Groups start fast and don't do their homework. They don't completely think through the influence question, assuming they can safely figure it out as they go along, or "build the plane while flying it." The consequence of this approach is that these groups fail to take the time to understand upfront how decisions will get made, and while they may get lucky, their efforts are inefficient and not as strong as they could be.

2. Ready, Fire, Aim

This is a close cousin to those in the fast and furious category. Here, groups handicap their efforts by making strategic decisions out of order. For example, some groups form a coalition before they identify which decision makers they need to influence or on what grounds they will

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make their case. Rather than crafting a strategy based on the interests and passions of the decision maker and then picking the strongest partners to bring that strategy to life, they are stuck developing an approach based on the assets and self-interest of the partners already assembled.

3. The Upsiders

This crew only sees the upside and approaches influence with rose-colored glasses. They don't look at who stands to lose if their campaign is successful. The Upsiders don't think about who is working against their effort, publicly or behind the scenes. The consequence? By not seeing any downsides, the group leaves itself vulnerable to opponents it doesn't even realize it has.

4. The Over Estimators

These folks overestimate a decision maker's willingness to step out on a difficult issue. They overestimate what they have to work with, such as relationships or credibility. They overestimate the simplicity of influence and as a consequence underestimate the difficulty of tasks necessary for their proposal to get traction. They never stop to ask: "If this is such a no brainer, why hasn't it happened yet?"

5. The Narrow Field Of Dreamers

These groups lack objectivity. They pick and choose which facts support the idea that influence is possible, but they dismiss any evidence to the contrary. Buoyed by selective facts and a perceived urgency that may or may not be there, these groups end up with an effort based on fantasy rather than reality.

6. The Gut Reactors

These organizations think the decision will get made for certain reasons (e.g., moral imperative) when, actually, it will be based on something entirely different (e.g., job creation). They lament, "Why do people act against their own self-interest?" The truth is the people in question are acting in their own interest-it's just not the interest the group thought it would be. If their gut is wrong, these groups will end up on the sideline of an important debate rather than front and center.

7. No GPS Crew

Some efforts just get lost. Pick any mix of the culprits above, and you'll find them present and accounted for here. The group picked the wrong decision at the wrong time, misjudged how complicated it would get, or chose the wrong grounds for arguing its case. Instead of stopping, taking stock and trying a new direction, they keep plugging away. At best, these efforts are futile and waste valuable resources. At worst, they end up alienating the very partners, champions and potential supporters that they will ultimately need to succeed.

How do you avoid these blind spots? *Want Influence* offers a four-step guide along with other easy-to-apply tools that can help you see around blind spots and chart a clearer path to success. The report is free and can be downloaded on [Spitfire Strategies' site](#).

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