

SIX PATTERNS OF SUCCESSFUL MOVEMENTS



Why Some Social Movements Succeed While Others Don't

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1. Turn Grassroots Gold

Winning movements are fueled by energy that materializes from the bottom up. The most successful organizational leaders understand they must turn their approach to power upside-down and let local activists lead...seeding and growing vast networks of millions of passionate individuals organized around a common cause is infinitely more powerful than any single organization or association.

2. Sharpen Your 10/10/10/20 = 50 Vision

Successful U.S. movements plow through all fifty states with their change campaigns, rather than focusing only on sweeping federal reforms. Networked leadership structures recognize the need to forge pathways so all of the players around them can collaborate rather than compete and achieve collective impact.

3. Change Hearts and Policy

Great social change leaders refuse to choose between either pushing for policy reform or shifting social norms and individual behaviors. They realize that to achieve lasting systems change, they must change public attitudes so people believe the changes they seek are fair and right.

4. Reckon with Adversarial Allies

The difference in winning movements is that leaders manage to put their egos and organizational identities to the side (if only temporarily) so disparate factions can come together around a common agenda — although the path to victory can be arduous and never linear.

5. Break from Business as Usual

Businesses can affect major change by altering their employee policies; raising their influential voices in public debates; and leveraging their innovation capabilities, as well as their brands and customer loyalty for causes. Companies willing to risk proactively pushing for positive social and environmental changes demonstrate that capitalist market forces can contribute to advancing many important causes.

6. Be 'Leaderfull'

Effective movement leaders share power, authority, and limelight and lead from behind, embracing a long term view. This is very hard to do-it involves letting go of ego, as well as putting cause and mission ahead of personal or organizational power. It's the main reason why some movements fail — and why the best movements win.

Systems need to be understood not by focusing on what each part is doing, but on how each part is interacting with the rest. Francis Westley, Social Innovation Scholar