Taking Creative Action to Boot the Braids!

The Planning Process

When developing your action, begin by thinking through your goals and options; consider how your action relates to the larger strategy on your campus and Boot the Braids nationally. Develop a clear understanding of what you are trying to communicate and to whom. These are some questions that can be useful to guide your planning process:

- What is your goal for this action? Is it to inform or build consciousness? Is it to escalate pressure on decision makers? Is it to bring visibility to your campaign? Is it to persuade a certain constituency of people?
- Who is your audience for this specific action? Is it an administrator? The student body? Local Wendy’s management?
- What messaging, style, and mode of delivery will be most effective in engaging that particular audience? What does your audience care about? What do you want them to take away from your action?
- Is the action fun? Does it raise participants’ morale? Will it garner media coverage?

Types of Creative Actions

Pickets

Pickets are one of the most common actions in the Campaign for Fair Food and can be a very effective means of communicating a message and building or maintaining pressure. Effective pickets take careful planning. Choose a place that is symbolic (a storefront, a prominent campus building), visible, and preferably with high pedestrian traffic. Create plenty of colorful signs based around a single, simple message, including at least one large banner that clearly communicates your demand. Be sure to designate point people for flyering, talking to press, communicating with police or security officers, and leading chants. Think through how you will end your picket; will there be speakers or a delegation? It is also important to research your city’s regulations regarding the use of sidewalks and make sure that they are clearly communicated to all participants.

Petitions

Petitions are great for building consciousness and spreading the word on campus. They can and should be combined with active outreach - tabling, classroom presentations, emails, attendance at club meetings - so that people are learning and immediately taking action to support the campaign. Before beginning a petition drive, set a goal for a number of signatures and clarify who it is that you’re asking to sign (students, faculty, members of particular departments, all of the above?) Then build a comprehensive plan to circulate your petition and deliver it once you’ve reached your goal. Petition deliveries themselves are also great opportunities to garner media attention - consider
combining it with a press conference or rally. With enough signatures, campus newspapers may also consider publishing your petition directly.

Street Theater
Street theater is an engaging and innovative medium to communicate your message in public spaces. Short skits performed on sidewalks or street corners, processions, pageants, parades, and costumed processions accompanied by music and puppets are common forms of street theater. Through street theater you can create metaphors that embody the dynamics within the tomato supply chain, educate others on the changes taking root in Florida’s fields, portray Wendy’s refusal to join their fast food competitors participating in the Fair Food Program, or illustrate the role your university can play in supporting farmworker justice. Effective street theater surprises and intrigues an audience, brings in passerby, garners media attention, and, importantly, energizes your group internally.

Marches
Marches are also a classic, and for good reason: a well-planned march gets your point across and energizes the crew. Much like pickets, marches require a careful division of roles and responsibilities. Ensure that you have chant leaders, water distributors, and a team of people who know the march route well and will keep things orderly. In the days leading up to the march, make sure you walk the route, investigate any necessary permits, and think through the pre and post-walk plans. And don’t forget: the very best marches are full of color! Bring people together and design some eye-catching art that succinctly communicates your message.

Banner Drops
Banner drops are a great way to communicate simple message quickly and directly. Scout a prominent location on campus, and take the appropriate measurements. Design a banner with a simple message — “Wendy’s profits from farmworker exploitation,” for example. Notify the campus press and be ready to give them details on the Boot the Braids campaign. Hand out flyers to passersby and/or collect petition signatures. Amplify the affect of your banner drop by creating a social media plan to spread the image throughout campus and the larger SFA network.

Vigils
To strike a more reflective and serious tone, consider gathering in the evening outside an important Wendy’s or campus location. Provide participants with candles (don’t forget wind guards - 12 oz clear plastic cups work well!) and incorporate some music and song if possible. Identify and invite speakers to share reflections regarding particular aspects of the Wendy’s campaign. Reflections can highlight how speakers are personally connected to the campaign and why its important
to them. Vigils are also a great opportunity to highlight the participation of campus and community-based faith groups.

**Press Conferences**
Press conferences are an effective means of harnessing the power of media to broadcast your message to a larger audience. An effective press conference takes careful planning. Start by identifying exactly what you want to communicate and the “hook” that makes it relevant to journalists. Craft a press release and create a press outreach plan. Identify who will speak and what each person will say. Plan the location and create attractive visuals that reflect your speakers’ message (think: “What will photograph well?” There’s a reason they say a picture is worth 1000 words...) For more support in planning and executing a press conference, email us at organize@sfalliance.org!

**Elements to Enhance Your Action**

**Visuals**
Integrating art into your campaign strategy and actions through bold, eye catching visuals is an important part of every creative action. They help to amplify your message, unify your group, and provide a visual story through symbols to capture your issue. Holding an art party to develop and create visual materials can be an event that brings people together and helps build support and excitement for the action! Banners, signs, and informational flyers for leafleting are important visuals to include in your action.

**Documentation**
Always document your action through photography or film. You don’t necessarily need a professional photographer or filmmaker; today many smart phones can take high quality pictures and videos. Amplify your message via local media, CIW media, and social media by sharing pictures and videos from your action (be sure to also shoot us your media reportback at organize@sfalliance.org, and use #BootTheBraids when posting to social media!)

**Music**
Music infuses life and energy into an action. It sets the event apart from the surrounding environment and helps attract a crowd. Drumming on a bucket, shaking a tambourine, or clapping as you chant are easy and effective ways to incorporate music. Play an instrument or know people who do? Invite them out and have them play a simple, rhythmic chord progression under your chants -- it’ll make a word of difference! Looking for something more involved? Try rewriting the lyrics to a popular song to fit your Boot the Braids campaign. Make copies of the lyrics and hand them out so participants can join in. Check out the media page at bootthebraids.com for a great example!