

Top 10 Things for Success In Health Freedom

A good team can make a big difference. There is no “Cookie cutter” approach.

1. Identify like-minded people who

- a. have similar concerns about health freedom.
- b. want to make change happen
- c. have the time and ability to participate
- d. who can function in a collaborative manner
- e. strategists and worker bees alike – it takes all kinds

Almost all states have some kind of group or organization working for health freedom. Contact these leaders and share your concerns and see how you can help. If there is not an existing organization begin your networking to find likeminded people.

Identifying compatible group members and group leaders is a spontaneous process. Groups generally find their own rhythms, with maybe some road bumps in this process.

2. Come together regularly! Make a decision to meet regularly in person or virtually (even if only a short time). And Use Roberts Rules of Order.

You will need one or two people who can chair meetings, and one or two persons to take notes and harvest contact info. And you will need a virtual forum to communicate between meetings such as Facebook closed groups, Basecamp group, Yahoo etc. etc.

3. Decide on an organizational structure.

There are many ways to form grassroots action groups that can receive donations. Some require the setting up of corporations and some are more informal. Here are some structure options:

a. An informal steering committee of individuals functioning by Roberts Rules of Order.

b. Incorporate as a non-profit or form a legal Coop. This requires incorporating under state law and then going on to apply for federal tax status.

c. Informal coalitions or coalitions and federations of organizations. In some states, there are already a number of organizations that want to promote health freedom and they do not wish to form a new organization but would rather just all work together and stay autonomous. In this instance delegates from each interested organization get together on a steering committee and make strategic decisions together and hold meetings according to Roberts Rule of Order. When

it comes time to do specific tasks or to pay certain bills such as lobbyists, the organizations decide between them who will do the task and who will pay the bill. Often, they split the cost of lobbying because it is a large cost. In terms of websites and memberships, the group often point to all of the websites or just choose one organizations' website to house all of the health freedom information on it. Also for memberships, they encourage people who speak with them to choose one of the organizations that belong to the coalition or federation and join that one. Coalitions and federations are more complex when holding meetings of the steering committee but promote strength in that major organizations have delegates always at the table. In addition, coalitions and federations can notify their delegate members to do press releases to their organization's data bases thus increasing the exposure for press releases and calls to action.

d. Other Options are many even including a for-profit organization doing lobbying and education. *The most important aspect of the structure of a group is to know exactly what the structure is* so that there is financial accountability and clarity among group members.

e. No matter which structure, fundamental you need to decide about decision-making. Who will make the decisions about your movement going forward? Will it be a formal, well-defined group such as the board or boards you set up? Will it be the people who end up meeting regularly and doing the work? Will you give your lobbyist power to negotiate and make deals, or will you retain decisions in your own group? Will you require consensus to go forward? (100 % agreement) or a simple majority, or two-thirds majority? Have discussions about this and note in your meeting minutes what was decided.

4. Identify and Agree on your goals and write them down. Share your goals with others if not confidential to get ideas and feedback and guidance from those who have gone before.

5. Develop specific objectives and time lines and expectations of how you plan to accomplish your goals.

6. Make an Action Plan, and task list: What needs to be done to accomplish the objectives.

7. Identify people and resources to implement action plan.

Consider the following Skills and Talents to Look for On the Health Freedom Team – If there are only 3 of you, you can wear more than one hat!

Teams are created to keep a project moving smoothly and efficiently and to have clear communications about responsibilities and strategies. Don't be discouraged

if you don't have all of these skills on your team at the beginning. Start the process and attract the people you need to help. Take the time to start doing the work and your team will grow as your movement grows. These are examples of helpful member skills:

a. Administrative support;

Administrative support is needed for setting up conference calling and conferences, meetings, historical record keeper and minute taker, photographer. Some people may not be at the capital but they are extremely good at chairing meetings, being secretary or treasurer, or doing administrative skills and will strengthen the organization by having the dependability of these functions.

b. Accounting

A group will always need a person responsible for keeping track of all funds solicited or used by the group, keeping receipts and records, and keeping the group updated on their financial status.

c. Designated Leaders or Facilitators

Depending on what type of organizational structure, groups always benefit from acknowledging their leaders and defining the roles their leaders take. From chairing or facilitating meetings to being the go between with the sponsors and lobbyists for the bill, it is important to have leadership and to know what role they are responsible for and whether leadership is shared by more than one person and how that is carried out. This will help for a smooth-running team and will also help the general public know who to contact and how they can get their questions answered. Especially for Sponsors and Lobbyists it is good to designate a person they can always be in touch with from the health freedom group.

d. Volunteer Coordinators

One of the strengths of any advocacy group is their volunteer helpers. Keeping track of volunteers and giving them tasks and following up with them is a big job. Sometimes volunteer lists are accumulated so they can be on stand-by and be ready to go into action as needed. Other times there are day-to-day tasks that they can help with that takes the pressure off other leaders like setting up meeting venues. The important thing about volunteers is to have someone they can contact to check in to see how things are going and if there is anything that needs to be done.

e. Database management for supporters.

Depending on the legal structure a group takes on there will be one or more databases at the state level interested consumers and citizens. No matter which structure is chosen it is important for the group to know how many is in their cumulative databases and how to reach people quickly and who is responsible for communicating with persons in the databases. Mobilizing the grassroots is a key component to being successful at passing legislation. When legislators see that their constituents are serious about an issue they generally listen up and learn

about the issue. When you have a large database of emails of people who want health freedom, a messages can easily be sent when needed, for example, call all members of the health committee and ask them to vote for HF.

f. Mass Communications: Digital and hard copy communications are both important. Today's world of digital reality is central to all movements now.

Website

Social Media

Database interface and alert softwares

g. Media Liaisons and Writers.

Media is important factors in health freedom campaigns. Publications and Newsletters can impact ordinary people and legislators easily. Often grass roots activists are surprised at how hostile the conventional media will be towards their bills or if not hostile, then silent. But alternative media is beginning to do a good job at promoting many health freedom efforts and are growing in popularity. A media liaison and a writer is a great asset to your movement.

h. Public Speaking, Publications, Newsletter, Press Release.

Having public speakers ready to address people at local meetings, radio sessions, and gatherings is very powerful.

i. Manager of Legislative Relations including districting to target districts, develop legislative calendar for legislator availability and events. It is very helpful to have persons on the team who are familiar with legislators and events and political campaigns and how districting works and how to target particular legislators.

h. Fundraising

Costs of passing a bill vary depending on many things, especially on whether professional services are provided by volunteers or paid contractors. Potential costs are for example, legal research, lobbying, accounting and checking accounts, incorporation (if needed), publications and printing of materials, website, public meeting arrangements, and many more. If a group is utilizing more than volunteer services, then fundraising is a very necessary part of a group plan. Some people are natural at raising money.

i. Lobbyist

A lobbyist is a person who is responsible for tracking a piece of legislation every minute and spending much time in and outside of the capitol convincing the legislators to vote for or against a bill and helping the sponsoring legislators get supportive or opposing votes for the bill through committees and on the floor of the legislature and all the way to the Governor's office. Health Freedom groups choose lobbyists who are happy to participate in their strategy meetings and are vocal about reporting back details of what is happening in terms of progress.

j. A Local Legal Researcher:

A researcher is important to understand the legal problem in its entirety. Local citizens are often great legal researchers, or national leaders can do legal research or they can look over research that is done by local people and give feedback on health freedom issues. A local attorney working pro bono on research is great too. A local state licensed attorney is needed if legal opinions and advice are needed.

k. Drafter of potential solutions:

Anyone can draft legislation or amendments to legislative bills. The legislature itself has attorneys that also draft solutions based on ideas that are given them. However, in the case of health freedom, it is very important to complete the drafting just how the group wants it. That way the bill or amendment will be as close as possible to what you envision. It is a good idea to run a bill or an amendment past national groups at the drafting stage to receive feedback from people who have extensive experience in this area. If the legislature drafts a bill from scratch often times it is not what you are expecting and may be difficult to change. A citizen drafter or a drafting committee that gets extensive feedback is very helpful.

l. Attorney Legal consultant to discuss changes

Bills often get amended in the legislature by other parties and things happen quite quickly at the legislature. It is always good to have someone on call to give an analysis of an amendment or to make comments or draft emergency amendments while the bill is traveling through the legislature. Interpretations of laws can be given by local attorneys.

m. Grassroots Trainer for Consumer Lobbying Efforts

Citizens are great natural lobbyists. However, they can be even better if they are provided guidance and mentoring. Often this can be done by a citizen-lobbying day at the capitol. Volunteers who have previous background in lobbying are great at helping citizens be effective grassroots advocates at the capitol and to provide guidance to citizens when they come to hearings. Lobby days are great events to plan to help citizens learn how to be in touch with their legislators, and also how to raise awareness of issues with legislators.

n. Community outreach net worker and coalition builder with other organizations

Some people are natural net worker and can set up meetings with diverse groups to get the word out. There are broad range of options for meetings with other groups ranging from meetings with potential opposing groups, to setting up constituent meeting of a particular legislator in their districts, to having speakers come in for a rally for health freedom supporters. Movements are built by building bridges in multiple sectors and different types of meetings and outreach can really strengthen the movement.

o. Persons who know the lobbying laws and the political process when needed are very helpful in directing the timelines for the goals.

8. Delegate tasks and timelines and determine times for report back.

9. Report back regularly and revise strategy and action plan when necessary. Keep up with the latest developments that impact your goals and discuss if necessary.

10. Plan events to celebrate milestones and keep the joy and vision and common bond alive within the group.