

## Part V. Lessons in Campaign Leadership

### Introduction

Now we come to assessing DeMarco's role as a campaign leader, and what campaign leadership lessons can be derived from our campaign narratives that are at least partly independent of DeMarco's uniqueness. (Perhaps not all campaign leaders need to rise at 5 am to run and sing opera arias at the top of their voices.)

We'll also end with an effort to provide a fuller human portrait of DeMarco himself than we have in the campaign narratives: a Portrait of an Advocacy Artist.

For more than 20 years at the Advocacy Institute in Washington, we sought to extract both from our own experience and the study of successful policy advocacy campaigns some useful, empirical insights and lessons for the leadership of such campaigns.

Beginning in 1990, with the guidance and feedback of my two Co-Directors, David Cohen and Kathleen Sheekey, I developed – and have continuously tinkered with – the all-too-grandiose concept of an issue campaign leadership “taxonomy.” What was meant by that was simply that successful campaigns seemed to require the confluence of leaders who could fill several distinct leadership roles. In most cases, there were one or two leaders who filled several of these roles simultaneously; but never a campaign in which one person filled *all* the requisite roles.

In our advocacy leadership training work at the Institute, the taxonomy proved useful in training coalition leaders and other advocates to scan and assess the complement of leaders they were working with, including themselves.

One test of the taxonomy was a simple exercise in which participants – usually around 15 or so, were asked, first, to think of one well-known national or international figure, historic or present whom they thought of as a model “leader” Around the room were posted blank poster papers, each headlined with one of the leadership roles, except for one labeled “Other.” Each participant was asked to write the name of the leader they chose under each of the headings that fit. Where no heading seemed right, then to write

the name under others. Next they were asked to think of a leader within their own coalition or advocacy campaign whom no one else was likely to know, and similarly write her or his name in the right place or places.

This exercise, over many advocacy leadership programs, proved useful in practical ways. In follow up interviews, participants reported that it had changed the ways in which they looked at their own leadership roles, in many cases forcing them to look at themselves as *leaders*, and then reaching out to recruit other who might complement their own leadership roles.

The exercise was also satisfying for us in two ways: First, as the posters were filled, the names spread out among all the categories – none went empty. Second, as we developed the taxonomy, expanding and tweaking, few and fewer names appeared under the catch-all “other.” So we conclude that we had found a useful way of looking at leadership roles.

But I need to introduce several caveats to the taxonomy. First, there is a good reason why we keep tinkering with the categories: they are slippery; they overlap; they do not always apply to issue campaigns; they are not always *all* needed for a successful campaign. For example, if the leading advocates for the policy ion question happen to be a fearsome, committed trinity of the one category, “*inside* advocates” such as the Governor, House Leader, and Senate President, no more leadership may be needed at all!

Acknowledging “grandiosity,” I started by labeling the taxonomy as capturing “*movement*’ leadership roles. But “movements” really describe more complex phenomena broader than most of our actual studies. Here, I write with somewhat more confidence of the narrower concept of “Issue campaign leadership roles.”

One more disclosure as I introduce the following chapters examining DeMarco’s leadership roles: As we have all along, I’ve again modified some of the leadership categories and descriptions to reflect the leadership lessons *I’ve* learned in researching and studying DeMarco and his campaigns.

- Here are the leadership categories that comprise – at this moment – the taxonomy. (A more detailed description will follow in the next chapters as we discuss each.)

### **Taxonomy of issue Advocacy Campaign Leadership Roles**

- Strategists
- Visionaries
- Statespersons.
- Strategic Communicators
- Insider Advocates/lobbyists
- Inside Leader-Advocates
- Expert Advocates
- Fundraisers
- Organizer/campaign Builders

**Strategist.** Strategists sort out that part of the vision that is realistically attainable, and develop a road map to get there. Strategists understand the political environment – what can be changed, what cannot be changed in the short term; anticipate obstacles, including those laid by unruly coalition members. They plan, but leaven planning with flexibility, able to change course radically when circumstances require. They recognize the need for short term success to maintain morale, but make certain that incremental change will not deflect progress toward long-term goals. .

**Visionary.** Policy advocacy campaigns take flight through visionaries. Visionaries inspire, lift the horizons of others, setting goals that have never before been imagined or seen as realistic. Visionaries challenge the conventional view of the possible, aim high, take risks, and rethink priorities.

**Inside Leader-Advocate.** Inside Leader-Advocates are elected or other officials who serve within Government, and are effective advocates with others in positions of authority and power. They welcome “outside” guidance and support; are neither resentful, nor intimidated by the sometimes unruly and conflicted nature of such support.

**Insider Advocate.** Insider Advocates are those veteran lobbyists, trusted political advisors, financial supporters, and others close to and wise in the ways of the political process. They understand – and keep up to date – on the internal politics of government, the political alliances and feuds, the “powers behind the throne, the political debts, and the motivations below the surface. They are vital sources of intelligence to advocacy campaigns. They intuit the approaches and arguments that resonate with policy makers, and press them

in ways that are not easily dismissed. They are skilled negotiators, and positioned to influence and open doors to key policy makers

**Expert Advocate.** Experts help ensure that public policy positions are well reasoned and grounded in solid science and policy research. They possess credentials and knowledge that lend credibility to and back up advocacy campaigns. They possess earned credibility with both policy makers and the media.

**Statesperson.** Statespersons carry the movement flag. They are the “larger than life” public figures that embody authority and trust. Statespersons radiate credibility for the movement far beyond its core supporters.

**Fundraiser.** Fundraisers find ways to secure the essential minimum resources to mount a broad citizen campaign, including non-Tax exempt, *political* issue campaign money.

**Organizer/Campaign Builders.** The quiet heart of any successful campaign, builders bring to each campaign “tappable networks” of allies developed over years of activism. Organizer/Movement builders build campaign leadership by recruiting the Inside Leader-advocates and others who can perform the campaign leadership roles they themselves can’t. They develop key support networks and create broad organizational alliances and coalitions. Builders reach out to draw in new allies; they recruit new activists and make them feel welcome, valued, and heeded. They bridge generations, link local with national, even international advocacy. They know that a movement is weakest when it shuns diversity and seeks only a narrow, homogeneous base.

Organize/campaign builders sustain coalitions. They create space for the knowledge gained through their own experience and the experience of others to be tapped, and initiate new approaches to participation so diverse voices are heard and their demands heeded. They circumvent organizational turf hurdles, they convene and facilitate, seek to explore differences through civil discourse and debate, and eschew rancorous division. They pay attention to sustaining relationships even when not calling upon colleagues or key allies to do something. They are at least as good at listening as speaking, taking pleasure in adopting the good ideas of others, putting others forward, bringing new leadership along. Builders also heal. Within the campaign, they communicate, communicate, communicate.

**Campaign Leadership Human Qualities.** The ideal successful campaign organizer/ builder will display a wide range of human qualities, encapsulated in “character”, which make the formidable requisite tasks possible. (Mere mortals may come close): boundless energy, infectious exuberance, patience, respect, trustworthiness, and moral authority. He or she possesses a strong enough ego to challenge vested power and withstand internal controversy and stress, yet remain free of destructive egotism, which can undermine any campaign. She or he evokes fierce loyalty and dedication through warmth, humor, joy, love, dedication to the common good, spirit (or spirituality).

We’ll begin Part V by examining those leadership roles that DeMarco fills – at least partially. We will also note, in the largest discussion, that of Organizer/campaign Builder, how he recruits others who can fill the leadership roles he cannot.