# LEADERSHIP ROLES IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Michael Pertschuk

# Introduction to the Leadership Taxonomy

# 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.

# Organizer / Campaign Builder

The quiet heroes of any successful movement, Campaign Builders reach out to draw in new allies; they recruit new leaders and make them feel welcome, valued, and heeded. They do the same for longtime movement members as well. They know that a movement is weakest when it shuns diversity and seeks only a narrow, homogeneous base. Builders bridge generations, link local with national, even international advocacy, create space for the knowledge gained through experience to be passed on, and initiate new approaches to participation so diverse voices are heard and their demands heeded.

# Strategic Communicator

Strategic Communicators are public teachers, masters of media advocacy; gaining the media's attention while framing the story in ways that support the policy objective. They are skilled at formulating key simplified concepts within "sound bites". They translate complex scientific data, complex public policy, and basic concepts of truth and justice into accurate, powerful metaphorical messages, the significance of which can be instantly grasped by the broad public. They understand the power of stories and embed their policy objectives within stories that resonate with broad publics.

# 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.

# 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.

# Fund-raiser

Fund-raisers find ways to secure the essential minimum resources to mount a broad citizen campaign.

# 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.

# Policy Expert

There is a latter day tendency to disdain credentialed expertise as "elitist," but the tobacco control movement has been built on a solid foundation of science, whose banner is held aloft by authoritative Policy Experts. With Policy Experts as part of the tobacco control leadership team, ensuring that all new discoveries and public policy positions are grounded in facts and well reasoned, it becomes much easier to convince the public that the tobacco industry is wrong when they call us "unthinking zealots."

# Conclusion

# The DeMarco Factor: Transforming Public Will into Political Power

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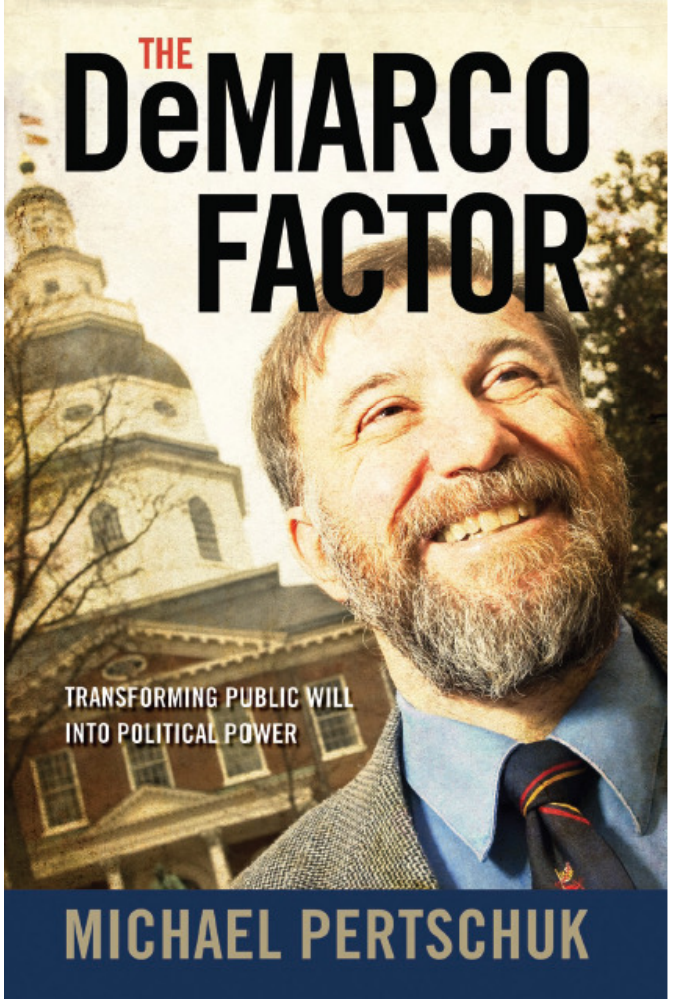

# Filling the Leadership Roles

**Vincent DeMarco,**

Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative

and

**Glenn Schneider,**

The Horizon Foundation

# Filling the Leadership Roles

- Strategist
- Organizer/Campaign Builder
- Strategic Communicator
- Insider Advocate
- Visionary
- Fund-raiser
- Statesperson
- Policy Expert

# Questions?

Please press *6 to unmute yourself.

# Exercise: Filling the Leadership Roles

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# Consider each of the roles from the Leadership Taxonomy:

- Strategist
- Organizer/Campaign Builder
- Strategic Communicator
- Insider Advocate
- Visionary
- Fund-raiser
- Statesperson
- Policy Expert

First, think about which of these roles you *now* fill.

- Strategist
- Organizer/Campaign Builder
- Strategic Communicator
- Insider Advocate
- Visionary
- Fund-raiser
- Statesperson
- Policy Expert

Then, think hard about which of the other roles you *could* fill.

## Then, look to your coalition and other allies who now fill the unfilled roles – or *could* fill those roles.

- Strategist
- Organizer/Campaign Builder
- Strategic Communicator
- Insider Advocate
- Visionary
- Fund-raiser
- Statesperson
- Policy Expert

Finally – the hardest challenge – think about how you might go about reaching out and finding others who could begin to fill out the gaps in your collective leadership.  Also think about who among your colleagues could help recruit those you still need.