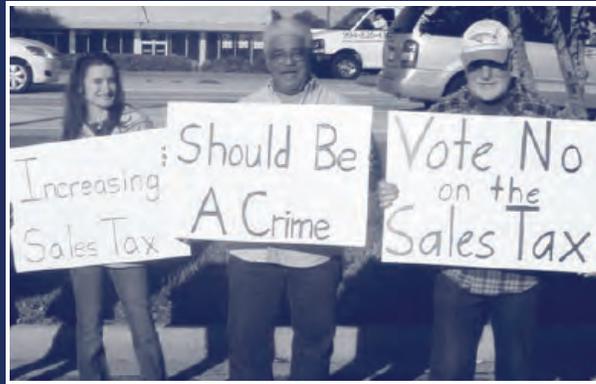


# SIGNS OF SUCCESS

Learn the techniques of effective sign making to advance your cause or campaign.





The Leadership Institute is a non-partisan educational organization determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be a public foundation operating under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Leadership Institute does not endorse, support, or oppose candidates or proposed legislation. The Institute has an open admissions policy; all programs are open to the public.

Contributions to the Leadership Institute by individuals, corporations, and foundations are tax deductible.

© Copyright 2012

# Signs of Success

Why learn the hard way by making  
the same mistakes others have made?

Learn the techniques of effective sign making  
to advance your cause or campaign.



Good

signs

achieve

many benefits.



Good signs multiply the effect of any demonstration.

*With good signs you can:*

- › Draw attention to what would otherwise be only a group of people
- › Make clear the purpose of your demonstration
- › Persuade people to agree with you
- › Show people you are bright and clever
- › Embarrass your opponents
- › Raise issues people might otherwise not think about
- › Attract valuable print and broadcast media coverage
- › Prevent the media from miscasting your protest
- › Maintain your cause's message



# GOOD SIGNS MUST BE:

## A. Well worded

The wording on each sign should be forceful, clever, emotion-packed, persuasive, or funny.

## B. Brief and to the point

Too many words make a sign hard to read, hard to understand, and unattractive to photograph.

## C. The right size

- › Signs too big are hard to carry and block the people who carry them. Signs too small do not draw attention.
- › Make your signs proportionate to the people who carry them. Signs held without a stake (by both hands) can be larger than signs carried on stakes.

## D. Legible to passersby and photographers

- › Leave sufficient margins, right and left, top and bottom.
- › Letters must be thick enough to be read easily and show up well in photos and video coverage.
- › Use dark letters on white backgrounds. Single strokes or felt-tipped pens are hard to read. Bold letters work best.
- › Use upper and lower cases. Long text in CAPS is ineffective because it is difficult to read.
- › Avoid designs that contain photos, symbols, or logos.
- › Handmade signs will set you apart from your opponent's boring, printed placards.

### Helpful tips

*You can outline block letters lightly in pencil and then fill in the outlines with black or dark-colored Magic Markers.*

*You can have your sign lettered with a one-inch-wide paintbrush by someone skilled. Use tempera or other quick-drying paint.*

# GOOD SIGNS MUST BE:

## *Helpful tips:*

*Drugstores, office supply stores, and quick-printing services sell suitable poster boards.*

*Paint stores and hobby stores sell different kinds of quick-drying paint.*

*Home improvement stores and lumberyards sell stakes.*

## *E. Made of the right materials*

- › Signs affixed to stakes should be on poster board that will not bend or curl.
- › Always use white or very light-colored paper with black or dark-colored lettering.
- › Stakes for carrying signs should have flat sides for stability when fastened to the sign.
- › A message on a banner (carried on long poles, with a person holding each pole) should be printed on a long strip of cloth. A paper banner tears easily.

## *F. Made with different wordings*

- › Good signs, differently worded, can make your effort more interesting and photogenic.
- › A variety of different signs will hold attention longer.
- › Keep all your signs on message. Do not try to address multiple, unrelated issues at one demonstration.
- › Passersby and the media will want to read all the messages on your signs.
- › In rare cases, multiple copies of one effective sign can make your point.

# GOOD SIGNS MUST BE:



## *G. Media Ready*

- › Notify the media before any event at which you intend to use signs. Media coverage multiplies the effectiveness of any good rally.
- › Contact the media about your upcoming activity.
- › Prepare for media interviews. Think of two or three concise talking points that encompass your group's position.
- › The most common question is, "Why are you here today?" A good response advances your group's position.
- › Assign one or two people to speak on behalf of your group to avoid mischaracterization of your group's views.

# GOOD SIGNS MUST BE:



## Helpful tips

*Some media look for all sides of an issue.*

*Bring signs to your opponents' events to make the most of every opportunity.*

*You may end up with almost the same amount of media coverage, without the headache of organizing the event.*

## H. Carried by the right people

- › Signs carried by photogenic people get more favorable attention and more news coverage. You don't have to be beautiful or handsome, although that can help.
- › If you are a student, dress like a student.
- › Make extra signs. A passerby who agrees with your cause may stop to join you.

# GOOD SIGNS MUST BE:

## *I. Displayed in the right place at the right time*

- › Always position your signs in full view of the camera. Put them behind speakers or facing interviewers. This is an easy way to ensure your position is seen by a larger audience.
- › Banners work if you have a crowd of supporters, but not if you have only a few demonstrators. Banners also work in parades.
- › If your sign's wording is clever, carry it with a constant, genuine smile. If your sign is seriously critical, keep a serious expression. You never want to look like you have lost your temper.
- › Issues spontaneously arise like a wave. You do not have to create every issue or event to earn quality media coverage for your cause. Ride the wave of news coverage by holding an event or rally surrounding a current event.

## *What determines a good sign's value?*

*Your sign's value is similar to real estate. It is all about location, location, and location. Plus timing.*

*Signs held in front of your opposition's headquarters can be newsworthy.*

*Positive signs at your events can greatly increase the likelihood of good media coverage.*



# GOOD SIGNS MUST BE:



## *J. Photographed and Videoed*

- › Take lots of photos and videos to ensure you get one great photo.
- › Share the photos through social networks.
- › Good photos taken at events will enhance your publications and create a stronger appeal in fundraising letters.
- › Post video on YouTube to increase awareness for your issue.

# GOOD SIGNS MUST BE:

## *K. Carried prudently*

- › Leftists often try to intimidate opponents. Good signs may cause them to target you.
- › Be aware of fringe groups that will attempt to hijack your rally or protest with signs supporting extreme positions.
- › Sometimes leftists may grab and destroy your signs or even deliberately use physical violence against you. Be prepared.
- › If you suspect violence from opponents, notify law enforcement beforehand.
- › Be prepared to take many photos and videos of misbehavior done by your opponents.
- › Your cameras alone may deter their bad behavior. However, if it does not, these photos can be used to embarrass your opponent.
- › Photos and videos of their assault and battery will get them in trouble with school or criminal justice authorities.

*Take photos and video of:*

*Your group with their signs*

*Your demonstrators in action*

*Your demonstrators talking to passersby*

*Any opposition activity in the area*

*Send the Leadership Institute photos of your effective signs.*

*Email them to [About@LeadershipInstitute.org](mailto>About@LeadershipInstitute.org). Best wishes!*

# THE REAL NATURE OF POLITICS

You have a moral obligation  
to study how to win.

Being right in the sense of being correct is not sufficient to win.  
The winner in a political contest is determined over time by the number  
and effectiveness of the activists on the respective sides.

The number and effectiveness of the activists on a given side is determined  
by its use of political technology, which includes organizational and  
communications technology.

Most political technology is philosophically neutral, which makes it  
inherently unattractive to people who are motivated by their philosophy.  
Nevertheless, you owe it to your philosophy to study how to win.  
You have a moral obligation to study how to win.

# ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

## Training Conservatives Since 1979

The Leadership Institute trains conservatives.

The Leadership Institute provides training in campaigns, fundraising, grassroots organizing, youth politics, and communications. LI teaches conservatives of all ages how to succeed in politics, government, and the media.

LI offers 40 types of training schools, workshops and seminars; a free employment placement service; and a national field program that trains conservative students to organize campus groups.

Since 1979, LI has trained more than 100,000 conservative activists, students, and leaders. Alumni include members of Congress, state legislators, local officials, media personalities, and conservative organization leaders.

*The programs of the Leadership Institute are only possible through the generous support of thousands of principled donors.*

## Stay Connected!



facebook.com/  
LeadershipInstitute



@LeadershipInst



703.247.2000



about@LeadershipInstitute.org



www.LeadershipInstitute.org



Steven P.J. Wood Building  
1101 N. Highland Street  
Arlington, VA 22201



LEADERSHIP  
INSTITUTE

Training Conservative Activists,  
Students, and Leaders Since 1979