The ACORN Organizing Drive

**Preparation**
Divide neighborhood boundaries, shoot for 2000 households; build list; identify potential issues from drive around, local news; lock down big launch meeting DATE, TIME and VENUE for 100-200 people 2 months into drive.

**Build Organizing Committee (OC)**
Sign up 20-25 members. “Second visits” to new members to ask people to take on work. Organize a “quick hit” to get a small win. “The organizing committee is your manpower on the drive, your legitimacy… and the focus on the issues. The group can be made or broken depending on the quality of your committee.”

**OC Meeting #1**
6-10 attendees. At an OC member’s house. “Draw people out to take roles in moving and running them... Allow for ‘testing’; digressions, humor, enthusiasm on the issues and events, and consensus on… commitments which members of the OC will be forced to make.”

**Quick Hit**
Starts to build momentum; first action taken with new members should be something winnable w/1 or 2 actions. Things that the target (city, local school, a company, etc.) is already supposed to be doing and has a system for doing, but isn’t. Sign up attendees.

**OC Meeting #2**
10-15 attendees. Door knocking and petitioning with OC to sign up new members. Sign up 10-15 new members. OC members getting good at the rap, taking ownership of turnout goals, preparing to run for office. “It’s the organizer’s job to get other people to take the lead.”

**OC Meeting #3**
15-20 attendees. Prioritizing top issues and developing campaign plan. Turnout. “Organizers facilitate the process where members analyze the circumstances of their lives and then think about making changes in institutions and power relationships.”

**OC Meeting #4**
15-30 attendees. Confirm roles for big meeting, rehearse necessary once. Final execution of turnout goals by phone calls, flyering at high traffic areas, yard signs. Track turnout progress/number of “Count on Me’s” with thermometer.

**Big Launch Meeting!**
100-1000 attendees. Among biggest group will ever have. Assume 1 attendee for every 3 yeses. Elections for chapter board, launch campaign for top issue to whole community. Major campaign milestones in calendars. Second issue is ready to go after campaign on first.

**Kickoff Action: Campaign Action #1**
Actions are the lifeblood of the organization. Prepare your leadership carefully to handle the action and the issue. Warn them of the possible responses. They should be organized, not only on the goal of the campaign, but also on where to settle in negotiation.

**Cleanup**
Debrief with Executive Board; have leaders lead effort to go back to non-attendees to look for ways for them to plug in so they know structure isn’t “set.” Identify secondary layer of leadership. At this point, 80% of the fundamentals of the group have been laid. The process does not simply repeat, but becomes more sophisticated.