



Spectrum of Allies

Communities rarely win campaigns by overpowering the opposition -- you win by shifting your target's support out from under them & growing your community of allies. Analyzing the Spectrum of Allies helps you take a step back to see the big picture -- not just the opposition-- and identify all of the groups and networks you could be connected to.

Campaigns can be won or lost by the willingness to step back and see the big picture. Using the Spectrum of Allies helps us avoid three main pitfalls that keep us from seeing the big picture:

Focusing only on the opposition leads to becoming disheartened or cynical, which means you ignore potential allies and support. *Focusing only on how to convince the important Vice President who is against you leads to ignoring all of the potential support you could build that could overpower her opposition*

Focusing only on active allies leads to being an isolated interest-group, which also means you ignore potential allies and support *Always doing events with the same group of individuals or organizations isolates you from creative, powerful community-building that can arise from new alliances and partnerships*

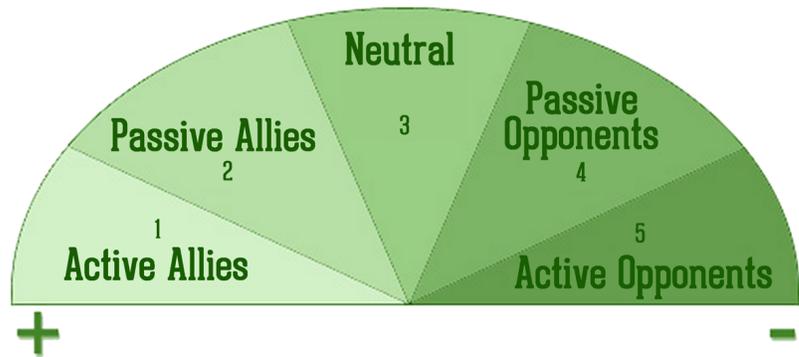
Generalizing about whole groups of people risks misunderstanding the nuances of communities *If you think about "students" as an entire group, you ignore the huge number of different groups & organizations (potential allies!) that exist in a student community*

Avoid focusing only on active allies or only on opponents. DO focus on passive allies. These are folks who know or care about what you're up to, but aren't doing anything about it! Give them a chance to participate and build power with you.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

Draw the chart on a big piece of paper. Move from left to right, placing different individuals or groups in each wedge -- be specific!

- **Active allies:** people who agree with you & are organizing alongside you
- **Passive allies:** people who agree but aren't doing anything about it (yet!)
- **Neutrals:** people who aren't sure, or are unengaged (they might just not know about you yet)
- **Passive opponents:** people who disagree, but aren't trying to stop you
- **Active opponents:** people who have done something to prevent you from reaching your goal



The Spectrum of Allies invites us to practice empathy -- we can look at the slices and ask, *What tactics will appeal to the various interests and needs of the groups so they will shift one step towards us, to grow the community of allies?*

FREEDOM SUMMER: ENGAGING PASSIVE ALLIES

In 1964, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a major driver of the civil rights movement in the U.S. South, conducted a "spectrum of-allies"-style analysis. They had a lot of passive student allies in the North: they were sympathetic, but had no entry point into the movement. They didn't need to be "educated" or convinced, they needed an invitation to enter.

SNCC sent buses north to bring folks down to "Freedom Summer." Students became active allies -- they came in droves, and many were deeply radicalized in the process, witnessing lynching & violent police simply because black folks were trying to vote.

Many wrote letters home to their parents, who suddenly had a personal connection to the struggle. This triggered another shift: their families became passive allies as they learned about the struggle from those letters. The students went back to school in the fall and proceeded to organize their campuses. More shifts. The result: a profound transformation of the political landscape of the U.S., resulting from a deliberate movement strategy.



TAKE ACTION!

Brainstorm tactics to shift the spectrum of allies

Tactics are what you do with your group, to your target, to achieve your goals and build your organization -- the events, actions, and organizing you do to build up your group and gain support for your goals!

Targets are the people who can absolutely get you what you want. In the Real Food Campus Commitment campaign, the primary target is your University President -- the person who can sign the Commitment. Likely, many secondary targets are your connections to the President. They are located somewhere on the Spectrum of Allies -- ideally not as active opponents, but probably not as active allies (yet!) Use Powermapping to understand who influences your targets, how you're connected to them, and how you can influence them and shift their support!

Use the Spectrum of Allies to brainstorm tactics for your campaign --- *what can you do to build support from the groups and individuals across the Spectrum? How can passive allies become active? How can opponents at least become passive, or even neutral?*

DRIVERS

- Prioritize leadership development: *what opportunities do these leaders want to take on? What skills do they want to further develop?*
- Actively support & nurture each other. Create opportunities for collective feedback.

ACTIVE ALLIES

- Identify, contact, and deepen relationships. Learn their skills, interests, motivations and personal goals
- *What opportunities can you provide these leaders to deepen their connections to each other & the campaign?*
- *Are there active allies who have relationships to people elsewhere in the spectrum that you don't know? How can you create opportunities for your allies to bring these folks deeper into the campaign?*

PASSIVE ALLIES

- Meet them where they are: *what opportunities can you pursue together, to build a mutually supportive relationship? How can you take action together?*
- *What actions can you take together that will allow passive allies to feel powerful and strengthen their conviction in the campaign?*

NEUTRALS

- *Do they even know about you & your campaign? How could you creatively engage them? How can you take advantage of existing opportunities to build relationships? What opportunities can you create yourself?*
- Remember: you don't need 100% of campus to support you! Brainstorm tactics that build buzz and flush out the people who are supportive but haven't connected yet.
- You might do something that draws out conflict & disagreement -- this is ok, it's important to discover conflicts that your campaign needs to address.

PASSIVE OPPONENTS

- Give them an opportunities to change their position, since they have not actively opposed you. *How can you address their actual needs, doubts, and fears in a way that strengthens your relationship?*

ACTIVE OPPONENTS

- Build a relationship, separate the person from the problem.
- Discover their motives for opposing you --research them, and consider how to reveal them.
- Utilize your power map. *Who do they care about -- who influences them? How can you mobilize that person to support you, and bring your opponent along?*