ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ACTIONS   3.20. 2012 js

There are two kinds of accountability in planning actions:

1.   Did you meet your goals?

Your goals should have been set in measurable or quantifiable terms. This is often difficult. Say you are protesting a certain behavior, such as spraying insecticides, and you set a goal of stopping pesticide spraying. If you then get a law passed to protect it, you will probably say you succeeded. However, if no one obeys the law and there is no enforcement, have you really accomplished your goal? To have a winner, perhaps you should have passed a more measurable goal, such as "pass a law to stop pesticide spraying". So, set measurable goals and, at the end of the project, see if you met them. Often activists set up intermediate or milestone goals. For instance, the overall campaign goal may have been to "stop pesticide spraying". A milestone goal might have been "draft a bill to stop insecticide planning" or "pass legislation to stop insecticide sprayng".

It is critical to evaluate the quality of your campaign at its end. Much can be learned about what strategies, techniques and tools worked, what didn't work, who can be counted on in the future for what types of things. Templates for work plans, checklists, etc. can be modified to be more effective. Without an evaluation of this type, much of the experience you gained is wasted. It is important to make your plans available, as part of OCCUPY archives, for other activists to access.

2.   Do you have a means for keeping team members on time, on message, accurate and at a good quality level?

Do you have a work plan with distinctive steps and due dates at which you can check on or "track" the progress of all team members; and either meetings or other means thru which you can do the check-ins. Every work plan should been built into distinctive "steps" or check-off points so that the whole team can stay in synch. Especially with folks who are working many places (a job, several occupy committees), it is easy to get off-task. As long as we can check on that routinely, we can catch back up. However, if it goes unchecked too long, it can really harm the campaign.

The check-ins are important not only for timeliness, but to be certain that the message is consistent and clear, that the information is accurate, and that the appropriate quality level is being reached (be it flyer, video, skit, greeting technique, whatever). There is often, among activists, a temptation to address other grievances that are not part of the campaign. For instance, one should not wear a "fuck the police" button when serving as a greeter at a bank campaign. It does not address one of our campaign issues, is a distraction, and may alienate some of the people we need to achieve the goals of the bank campaign.