

# 7 TIPS TO BUILD YOUR BASE VIA BLENDED ORGANIZING



As [Hahrie Han](#) says, organizing is “a transformational process through which participants gain the skills and expertise they need to build the power necessary to win the changes they seek.” **Online-offline organizing, which the Lab also calls “blended organizing,” is organizing that engages participants using in-person and digital touches in concert with one another and mobilizes them to act both online and in-person.**

Like all organizing, its power stems from relationships, so successful blended organizing intentionally creates digital spaces to complement the in-person interactions in which participants build trust and engage in meaningful work. Your own version of blended organizing should account for where your constituency “lives” (geographically and digitally), what technology you have the capacity to learn and manage, and your organization’s capacity to evaluate progress and implement what you learn.

## 1. MAKE SURE YOU ARE CLEAR ON YOUR CONSTITUENCY

Recognize who makes up the base that you are trying to organize. This means you know who they are, their identity traits and the social ties that they share with each other, where you are likely to find them, and you have developed the narratives you want to use to engage them. Everything else depends on this clarity. “The general public” is likely not your constituency.



## 2. OUTLINE AN ORGANIZING PATHWAY (OR SUPPORTER’S JOURNEY)

Think of your organizing pathway as a story with a beginning, milestones, and an end. Imagine this as a written plan or diagram. Start designing your pathway by envisioning an ideal end point – the ideal relationship you have with your supporter, the relationship they have with other supporters, and what they can accomplish as part of your organization or movement.

Name that pathway end point something that embodies your ideal, such as “Organizational Spokesperson” or “Skilled Leader.” Then, go back to the beginning and think about the series of steps necessary for a supporter to reach that ideal end point. How can they get started? Perhaps that first step is “Respond to Outreach” wherein the supporter actively and enthusiastically says yes to learning more about ways to get involved with activism.

Now that you have your end point and your starting point, lay out the series of intervening “**steps**” or “**stages**” your supporters need to go through to get from the beginning to the end. For example, a step along the way could be “Connection,” representing the stage at which your supporters are taking their first steps into longer-term relationships with the organization and each other. The stages of your organizing pathway represent the combination of skill, commitment, and expertise your ideal supporter would have at that point.

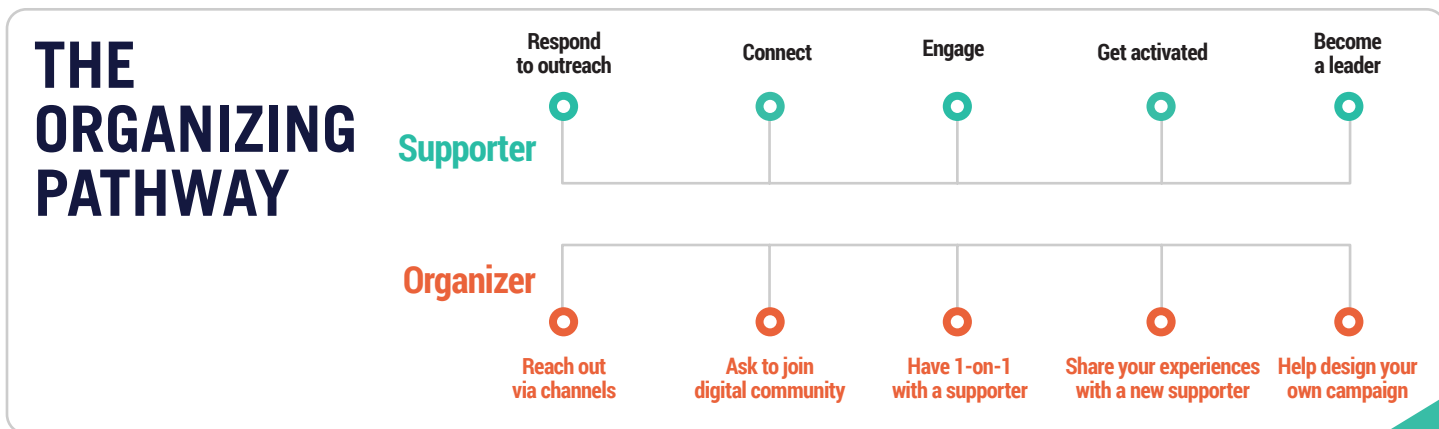
### THIS TIPSHEET CAN HELP YOU...

- UNDERSTAND the key elements of online and offline actions and how they work together.
- DEVELOP your day-to-day blended organizing workplan.
- DEVELOP an overall “organizing pathway” (a term originating from in-person organizing) or “supporter’s journey” (a term originating from digital campaigning) that best represents how you organize with your members. These terms mean the same thing and are interchangeable; we use both in this tipsheet.
- MAKE SPACE for **learning** and **evaluation** in your organizing practice.

## LINK ORGANIZER ACTIVITIES WITH EACH STEP

For each discrete step on your pathway, list as many types of activities you think supporters at that stage should be doing. For instance, for a step of “Connection,” activities could be “join our digital community” or “send a welcome text to a new member.” For a step of “Activation,” activities could be “be a press spokesperson” or “share your experience with another member.” For a step of “Engage,” activities could include “sign a petition” or [“have a 1-on-1 meeting with an organizer”](#) (which can be done in person, over the phone, or via video).

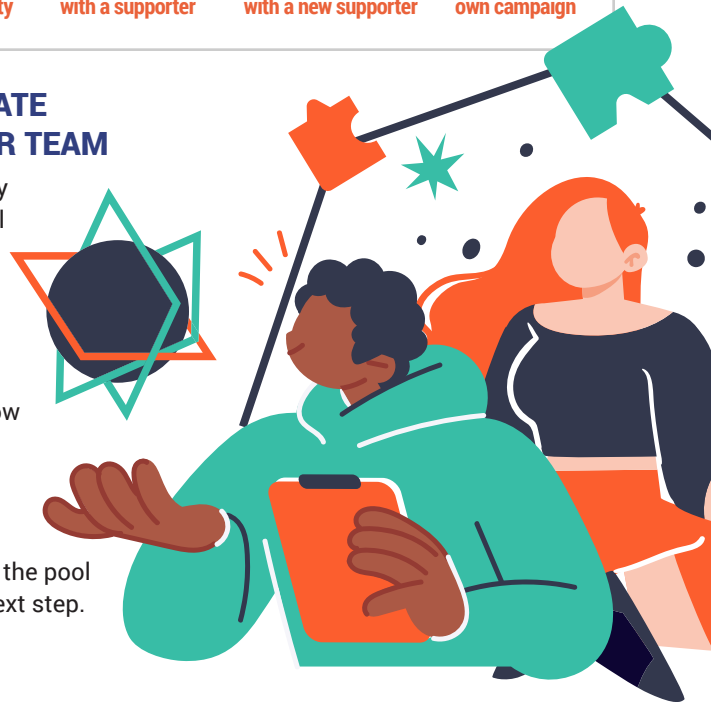
Be as comprehensive as possible. Some activities may appear in more than one step. Some activities may be digital-only; others may be in-person only. Some, like 1-on-1s, can be either. Going through this process helps you understand the relationship between your day-to-day work, your organizational goals, tactics, and strategies, and the outcomes you want for your supporters. It helps you picture how you might align supporters’ actions with desired outcomes and identify where you might be able to integrate learning and evaluation so you can do more of what works.



### 3. USE THE PATHWAY ACTIVITIES IN EACH STEP TO CREATE DAY-TO-DAY WORKPLANS FOR YOURSELF AND/OR YOUR TEAM

You have the pathway. You have the things you want supporters to do as they move along the pathway. Now you need plans for what you, the organizer, will be doing to ensure your supporters’ success.

For example, if the first step on your side of their pathway is to connect with supporters as they sign onto your website or petitions, your workplan should include plans to “Build Our Organizational Outreach Lists.” To move from “Build Our Organizational Outreach Lists” to “Connect,” you might map out how you will ask the supporters on your list(s) to take one or more of the actions that are associated with “Connect.” In that example, it could be contacting a supporter by email (or text or DM or social media or phone) with the aim of getting them to agree to sign on to your principles, or join a Facebook Group, or even agree to a 1-on-1 meeting. Anyone who completes your ask is now in the pool of people ready to do the things that will move them from “Connect” to the next step.



### 4. INCORPORATE EVIDENCE-BASED INSIGHTS

As you implement your pathway steps, you should maximize engagement by incorporating insights from the Lab’s [“9 Evidence-Based Insights for Action-Taking”](#) Tipsheet. Some applications of these tips for using social media platforms to help build relationships are highlighted [in this training](#). The same tips are contextualized for working with leaders and leadership teams in [this training](#).

Insights around building identity, invoking efficacy, and integrating legitimation rhetoric into your messaging and conversations with your supporters are especially helpful for increasing action-taking and turnout, as well as building the foundations for long-term relationships with your supporters. For example, treat new supporters who have all taken the same action as a [“cohort” of new supporters](#).



## 5. CREATE CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Take the time and effort to build as many moments, opportunities, and spaces for **creating community** among your supporters as you can. People show up because you ask them to and stay because they find meaning and fellowship in doing the work. As a leader, creating connections among your supporters is essential to your long-term success of blended organizing. This is because connecting with others – participating in fellowship – is an essential ingredient in what motivates people to take in-person action.

Connection occurs in-person, but also in digital spaces. For supporters who have mostly interacted with you using digital means, creating digital communities is a critical means of providing fellowship. The work in which you engage your supporters will **provide the meaning** and the sense of being part of something bigger than themselves.

## 6. TEST AND EVALUATE TO LEARN WHAT WORKS BEST

Getting the right sequence of interactions that maximizes your ability to move your supporters across your full pathway requires **experimentation and feedback**. Take the time to track your data (e.g., phonebank signups, 1-on-1s, etc.) and **engage in testing** to find out what works best for you.

For example, track which set of activities are more successful in getting people active and moving through your pathway. Does texting people immediately after they sign a petition result in more 1-on-1s? Do more people join your digital community if you invite them during a real-time conversation (i.e., during a Zoom meeting or on the phone) than if you invite them over email? Each transition from one position on the pathway to the next is an opportunity to learn how you can do it in ways that maximize your desired outcomes.