



New methods

Let's demonstrate in marching

Description of the method

Marching demonstration is an event during which a group of people march together to show that they disagree or support something or someone.

The successful demonstration depends on four elements: the precision of its objective/message, participants involved, impacting the idea to intended target (those who need to hear it), and leaving a sense of success and support for the issue with your audience and media.

Target group

Teenagers, adults (demonstration participants)

Legislators, politicians, general public (target of the message communicated)

Number of participants

Any number of participants. However, the most visible demonstrations involve a mass number of participants.

Environment

Outdoor public spaces. It could be a street or a city square.

For example, it could be organised next to the official institution, department, public office, a city hall.

Materials

Visual material such as banners, posters, and flags. Materials generating sound: musical instruments (such as drums, wind instruments), portable playback equipment (preferably the one that can operate without the need to connect it to the electricity), a megaphone.

Objective/aim of the method

A good method to provide advocacy for or against something or someone. Develop organisational and social activist skills.

Step by step instructions

Step 1. Create the team of organisers.

You need to gather like-minded people around you (and your idea) who will help you to organise the demonstration. You need to create a team and act together. You may also invite a local organisation dealing with the issues you want to raise to cooperate in the project.

Step 2. Outline your plan.

Address basic questions about your goals, target, and action.

What do you want to accomplish? Define your goal. Typically, it would be an advocacy (support) action or a protest. One of the common advocacy goals is to urge legislators to pay attention to the needs of particular (often disadvantaged) group of people.

Step by step instructions

Who is in position to make your goal happen? Define your target. Decide who should be the recipient of the demonstration message and who would attend the event.

What activity (organised when and where) could make the target listen to you? (Action/impact). Typically, marches are some of the most common forms of communicating protest and advocacy. The demonstration should be organised in the place you can meet your target (for example, at the city hall or next to the official seat of the member of parliament). You should learn whether this place would be available in the time you plan to meet your target, and if it accommodates the number of people you want to involve. You need to know whether you need a permit to use that place.

Step 3. Action tactic

You need to develop clear structure of the demonstration planned. Its program should be precisely matched with the goals of the demonstration. You should create detailed schedule of the demonstration which should be delivered to all the participants, so they know what will happen and what is planned to be done.

Step 4. Logistics

Some of the most important questions regarding the demonstration logistics include:

- The eventual necessity and cost of portable sound system handling, musical performers and technicians, toilets, medical care in case of emergency, parking, litter disposal, banners and flags, crowd control, and so on.
- Transport of people taking part in the demonstration – how they get to and from the demonstration place?
- Cleaning up services – how to clean-up during and after the demonstration.
- Media meeting plan – who will talk with media before, during and after the demonstration? What to say, etc.
- Plans for the follow-up – what happens after the demonstration.

You must think about any possible problems that could occur during the event, and design what to do when they would happen. This could include the presence of counter-demonstration; a very little number of participants; absence of media, etc.

It is crucial to inform local authorities about the space and time in which demonstration will take place. Provide information on the rules of demonstration to the participants, such as the issue of the use of violence (which usually is being unacceptable).

In the context of choosing exact timing / date of the demonstration you would need to coordinate the availability of participants joining the demonstration with the presence of the target in the same place.

Step 5. Date and timing

It is crucial that you decide when the demonstration would be the most effective. Some of the best solutions include the coincidence with another event related to the demonstration goal (election day, public appearance of important politician or celebrity, the demonstration opposed to your goal, national day related to your issue).

Step by step instructions

Step 6. Legal issues

You must get acquainted with the regulations regarding public demonstrations in the area you want to organise it. It is possible that you will need a special permit to proceed with your event. There would be possibly some restrictions regarding fines for leaving the trash uncleaned, using loudspeakers and so on. Remember, in case you will not meet the requirements, you can be judged for the consequences.

Step 7. Promotion

Promotion of the event is crucial to make people participate and for the impact. You have to decide how to promote your demonstration. This may be dependent on the amount of time and money you can spend. You must know approximately how many people you want to attract. Promotional methods can include production and distribution of flyers, posters, as well as direct contact (for example by phone and email) as well as posts on social media, paid advertisements, newsletters, distribution of media materials.

Promoting an event is at the same time informing on the issue you want to raise during the demonstration (goal).

Do not forget to invite all possible media to the event (television, radio, press, bloggers, etc.) telling them about the importance and innovation of your goal.

Step 8. Build community.

During each stage of the planning process think about the building community around your goal. You can invite friends, family members and organise parties in advance of the demonstration to make group relations stronger among your team and sympathizers.

Step 9. Make the event peaceful.

A good way to avoid some unexpected damages can be to designate some peace marshals within your team. A peace marshal keeps eye on any risks taking place during the event, trying to deescalate them. You may invite members of local police or fire station to participate in the demonstration as peace marshals.

Step 10. Clean up.

Express your expectations among demonstration participants relating to the cleaning during and after the demonstration. Be yourself a good example of garbage collection. Leaving a mess after your event is not a good hallmark of your team and your issue.

Step 11. Follow-up

Following the demonstration, gather your team for evaluation. Talk about every element of the project and record the conversation. Give thanks to your team and collaborators so you can probably organise together another demonstration in the future.

After the demonstration you need to proceed with other kind of follow-up as well. This could include taking part in subsequent events (press conference, visiting legislators). Make sure that media reports include interviews with important figures taking part in the demonstration, the target, representatives of your team.

Step by step instructions

In the long-term perspective you would need to follow-up on the success of the demonstration. You can talk to the target representatives in case of proceedings related to your goal. You can also produce and publish some multimedia materials collected during the event. Finally, you can organise other events that address the same cause at other locations or in other manner.

Tips for the trainer

Let the team work independently. Trainer should be more facilitator than the main initiator of the event. Let the team express their political demands freely, than let them decide what is the main cause (goal) of the demonstration.

Any other comment on the method

A successful demonstration may not show obvious results at once, but it is possible that it would help develop the goal building a foundation for future happenings.

Good luck!

