

# BUILDING MEANINGFUL CALLS TO ACTION

Powerful stories move people to action. Here's how to create calls to action that work.

Great calls to action are:

- 1 Specific:** Are you asking people to take an action that is observable and that can support your metrics of evaluation?

For example, instead of suggesting that people give to your cause, provide a link and suggested amounts, or a way to give a small amount every month. Instead of suggesting that people “educate” themselves, provide a reading list; links to discussion forums; and links to where they can purchase, borrow, or rent resources.

- 2 Meaningful toward the issue:** Will the thing you are asking people to do actually move the needle on the problem you've set out to address? Will they feel that, too? When people feel their actions make a difference, they're more likely to stay engaged and keep taking action.

For example, a call to action like “Stand up to racism” might inspire someone, but it could also leave them feeling like they are acting alone, and their action might seem to them like a drop in the bucket in the face of a large and complex problem. It may be more meaningful for people to share their story of how a policy harms them with an elected official, either through a meeting or a letter.

- 3 Achievable:** Is the thing you're asking someone to do actually possible? Sometimes, we use the goals of our efforts in place of calls to action. This can leave people feeling overwhelmed or uncertain about what action they can take, and lead them to do nothing at all.

Instead of offering a call to action like “End structural racism,” which might leave even the most committed and well-meaning activist at a loss, identify the specific conditions you're trying to change. How might the community you're inspiring to act create pressure on those who can change the conditions?

- 4 Easy:** As much as possible, make it easy for people to act. Link to sign-ups for events or rallies, create donation pages that make it easy to give, and provide clear instructions about what you want them to do and why it's important.

- 5 Participatory:** Create space and opportunities for people to bring their own voices and personalities to accepting your call to action.

- 6 Something it feels like everyone is doing:** Our behaviors as individuals are heavily influenced by our perceptions of what people we see as similar to us are doing. So, your call to action might include language like, “People who care about ending economic injustice are [taking XYZ action].”

- 7 Activate emotions that keep people engaged:** Such emotions might include pride, hope, awe, parental love, and sometimes anger.