

Why solution focused campaigning?

Most campaigns start with what's wrong.

They show the damage, name the culprits, and demand that people pay attention.

That matters. But it's not enough.

When people only hear about problems, they often feel overwhelmed. They think: this is terrible, but what can I actually do about it?

Solution-focused campaigning asks a different question.

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Not: What's wrong, and who's to blame?

But: What would better look like, and how do we get there?

This shift changes everything. It gives people something to fight for, not just against.

A SIMPLE SHIFT IN QUESTION



What a solution-focused campaign looks like

A solution-focused campaign does six things well.

1

It describes a better future clearly.

These aren't vague hopes. They're a specific picture of what would happen if the problem was solved. People must be able to imagine it.

2

It explains how to get there.

What must change? Which laws, policies, institutions? The more concrete these are, the more believable they will be.

3

It connects to real power.

Who has the authority to make this happen? What pressure do they respond to? How can they effect change using the power they have?

4

It addresses the obstacles honestly.

These are political, economic, and institutional. A solution-focused campaign has real answers to "we can't afford it" and "it's never been done."

5

It builds hope and the sense that people can make a difference.

This is not optimism for its own sake, but makes the genuine case that change is achievable.

6

It asks people to act.

What are the clear, purposeful actions that might move things forward. This is not just awareness-raising. It is about change.

A BETTER TOMORROW IS POSSIBLE

A solution-focused campaign turns ideas into real change by showing a better future and a credible path to get there.



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A step-by-step guide

A solution focused campaign has a plan.



Get the problem right.

Be clear and specific. Do your research. What exactly would you like to see happen? Be specific about the change, and use plain language.



Define what success looks like.

Write a single sentence, or paragraph at most, describing what things will look like when you've won. If you can't write that, you're not ready to campaign.



Work out what has to change.

Is it policies, funding, the laws, or political leadership? List what concrete changes are needed and in what order.



Map the obstacles.

Who benefits from the current situation? Who will resist change, and how? What resources do they have? What are their weak points? How can it be exploited?



Make the case.

Show that your solution works. Do so economically, practically, and politically. Borrow evidence from elsewhere. If that's not available, create the case.



Build your coalition and act.

Who else wants this? Reach out and find them. Work with them. Use every lever available: public pressure, political access, media, and direct action or whatever the situation calls for.

FROM PLANS TO PROGRESS

A clear plan turns good intentions into real change.

Breaking the process down into steps makes it feel achievable — even when the challenge is big.



“Real change happens when good ideas are turned into a plan, and people take action together.”

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Why this approach works

Problems without solutions breed despair.

When people only hear that things are broken, many conclude that nothing can be fixed. The people who benefit from the status quo know this, and they use it.

Solution-focused campaigning refuses that trap. It says: here is the problem, here is the solution, here is how we get there, and here is what you can do.

That combination of analysis plus hope and action is what moves people.



It changes the story

It replaces a sense of helplessness with a sense of possibility.



It builds support

People are more likely to get involved when they can see a positive and realistic way forward.



It puts pressure on decision makers

Clear solutions make it harder for leaders to ignore real change.



It keeps people going

It sustains motivation, even when progress is slow.

HOPE IS A TOOL FOR CHANGE

Hope is not the opposite of serious thinking.

It is what becomes possible when you understand what can be changed and how to change it.



“A clearer, fairer future is possible when we focus on solutions.”

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The hardest part is **imagining change**

Before you can campaign for change, you have to imagine it.

That sounds easy. It isn't.

Most of us spend our lives inside systems that already exist. Money works in a particular way. Taxes are collected in established ways. Businesses are organised in ways permitted by existing law. Public services work within established structures. Wealth and power are distributed as they are.

Because these arrangements surround us, they begin to look natural.

We stop seeing them as choices.

And once something looks inevitable, imagining an alternative becomes extraordinarily difficult.

This may be the greatest obstacle to change.

THE PROBLEM

We usually ask:

“How can we improve what we've got?”

The more radical question is:

“What would we create if we did not assume that what we've got has to continue?”

That is where imagining change begins.

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1. Recognise that the present was imagined too

Almost everything we now take for granted was once an idea.

-  The NHS did not always exist.
-  Universal education did not always exist.
-  Old-age pensions did not always exist.
-  Women did not always have the vote.
-  Multinational companies were not always required to report information country-by-country.

Someone had to imagine each of these things before they could happen.

And before they happened, opponents could say that they were unrealistic, unaffordable, unnecessary or impossible.

The important point is simple.

The world we live in was imagined before it was created.

If other people imagined the institutions we have now, we are entitled to imagine different ones.

THE QUESTION

What do we currently treat as permanent that is really only a choice?



If the present was imagined, a different future can be too.

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2. Stop starting with what exists

There is a trap in asking:

“How could we reform this?”

The question already assumes ‘what is’ must continue.

Suppose instead that we ask what we actually want.

Not:

“How do we reform the housing market?”



But:

“How do we make sure everyone has a secure, affordable and decent home?”

Not:

“How do we find more money for social care?”



But:

“How do we make sure everyone gets the care they need?”

Not:

“How do we make the tax system slightly fairer?”



But:

“What should tax achieve?”

Starting with the existing system restricts imagination.

Starting with the outcome opens it.



THE RULE

Begin with what people need, not with the institutions we happen to have.

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3. Remove false constraints

Imagination is easily killed by objections.

- “We can’t afford it.”
- “The markets wouldn’t allow it.”
- “Business wouldn’t accept it.”
- “That’s not how things work.”
- “It has never been done.”

These claims sound like constraints.
Sometimes they are simply assumptions.



That does not mean there are no limits. There are.

We cannot imagine our way around shortages of people, skills, land, energy, materials, productive capacity or environmental limits. Those are real constraints.



But money, existing institutional arrangements and current political conventions are not the same thing.

Before abandoning an idea, ask:



IS THE LIMIT REAL?

Does this proposal require resources that do not exist?

Or:

Does it merely require us to organise the resources we have differently?



Imagination needs real constraints.

It does not need invented ones.

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4. | Ask “What if?”

Imagination needs permission to experiment.

That begins with two words:

What if?



What if housing was primarily organised to provide shelter rather than investment returns?



What if caring for relatives and others had the same value as paid work?



What if the purpose of taxation was understood as shaping society rather than paying for government spending?



What if savings could be directed towards rebuilding the economy?



What if public services were designed around need rather than arbitrary financial targets?

You do not have to know immediately whether every idea will work.

That comes later.

The first task is to make alternatives thinkable.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION

Do not ask “Why won’t this work?” too soon.

First ask:

“What becomes possible if we allow ourselves to think differently?”



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5. Turn the problem upside down

Sometimes the easiest way to imagine change is to reverse the question.



If rents are unaffordable, do not begin by asking how tenants can afford higher rents.

Ask instead:

Why are rents allowed to become unaffordable?



If people cannot get the care they need, do not begin by asking how services can ration care more efficiently.

Ask instead:

What would a system designed to provide enough care look like?



If wealth is extraordinarily concentrated, do not begin by asking how poorer people might save a little more.

Ask instead:

What creates the concentration of wealth in the first place?

Reversing the question exposes assumptions hidden inside the original problem.

And once those assumptions become visible, alternatives become easier to imagine.



TRY THIS

Take the question everyone is asking.

Then ask whether it is the wrong question.

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6. Build a shared vision of what's possible

Change becomes more likely when people can see, feel and talk about a better future.

A shared vision gives direction, builds momentum and helps to bring people together.



Make it positive

Focus on what we want to see, rather than what we want to stop.



Be specific

Describe what a fairer, healthier, more sustainable society would look like in practice.



Make it inclusive

Develop the vision with the people affected by the problem, not just experts or professionals.



Keep it grounded

It should be ambitious but credible, showing a realistic path from here to there, within the real constraints that exist.



Show the benefits

Explain how it will improve people's lives and strengthen society as a whole.

A compelling vision turns possibility into a goal that people can work towards together.

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A CLEARER TOMORROW

People are more likely to support change when they can imagine the benefits.



“A different future is not only possible, it is within our reach if we choose to imagine it together.”

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Imagination comes before change

**Before something can happen in the real world,
it has to be imagined.**

Every major social improvement began with people
imagining a different and better future.

At first, these ideas often seemed unrealistic.
But imagination helped to make them possible.



The end of slavery

People imagined a society where
no human being was owned by
another.



Votes for women

People imagined a fairer democracy
where everyone had a say.



The welfare state

People imagined a society where
no one was left without the basics
to live with dignity.



Action on climate change

People are imagining a cleaner,
greener and more sustainable future.

These changes did not happen overnight.
They started with people asking, “What if?”
and believing that a different future was possible.

**Imagination is not a luxury.
It is a necessary first step.**

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A DIFFERENT TOMORROW BEGINS IN THE MIND

When we imagine a better
future, we open the door
to new possibilities.

Imagination helps us see
what could be, not just
what is.



**“A fairer, healthier,
greener society begins
with people who
dare to imagine it.”**