

## How can we move people from *passive support* to *supportive action*?

**If knowledge alone could create change, the world would already be a better place.** Yet time and time again, we find that people know and even care about an issue and still fail to act. Real change requires action, and the key to moving people from knowledge to action is persuasion. But how can we persuade people? What techniques work best?

*Discovering the Activation Point™*, a new report from the Communications Leadership Institute™ and Spitfire Strategies™, examines the tried and true work of leading thinkers on persuasion through a nonprofit lens. The result of this groundbreaking exploration is a set of best practices that nonprofits can draw on as they plan to persuade.

### What did we find?

- An activation point occurs when the right people at the right time are persuaded to take an action that leads to measurable social change.
- When people have a high level of awareness of an issue, they are not motivated by more information. In fact, it can contribute to their state of inertia.
- Hope is the only absolutely, positively essential ingredient to campaigns trying to inspire action. You must make people believe that the situation will get better – with their help.
- There are several stages to successful persuasion:
  - *Stage One:* People need to know, believe and care enough to want to act.
  - *Stage Two:* People must have the will to act.
  - *Stage Three:* Once people act, they must be rewarded for doing so.
- Timing is everything. Deciding when it is the right time to persuade people is a critical factor to defining an activation point – and can be very tricky.
- Understanding an audience's comfort zone is key. There are clear limits to what even the most passionate people are willing to do, especially if the "ask" is outside their comfort zone. On the other hand, asking people to do things within their comfort zone allows them to feel good about helping without putting themselves at risk.
- People are selfish. They need to feel an issue is directly relevant to their own lives before they will act.

### So what?

Above all, organizations must plan to persuade. Nobody ever changed the world simply by issuing a report, but building people's will to act on important issues can make change happen. The Activation Point shows nonprofits how.

To download a copy of *Discovering the Activation Point*, visit [www.CommunicationsLeadership.org](http://www.CommunicationsLeadership.org) and click on the Activation Point.

*The Communications Leadership Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing nonprofits with the training and tools they need to increase their communications capacity and use high-impact communications campaigns to achieve their goals. For more information, visit [www.CommunicationsLeadership.org](http://www.CommunicationsLeadership.org).*

*Spitfire Strategies is a communications firm that works with nonprofit and foundation clients to increase their capacity to create high-impact communications programs that support their goals and achieve their missions. Spitfire also helps nonprofits strengthen their internal communications capacity through our training programs and communications tools. To learn more, visit [www.SpitfireStrategies.com](http://www.SpitfireStrategies.com).*