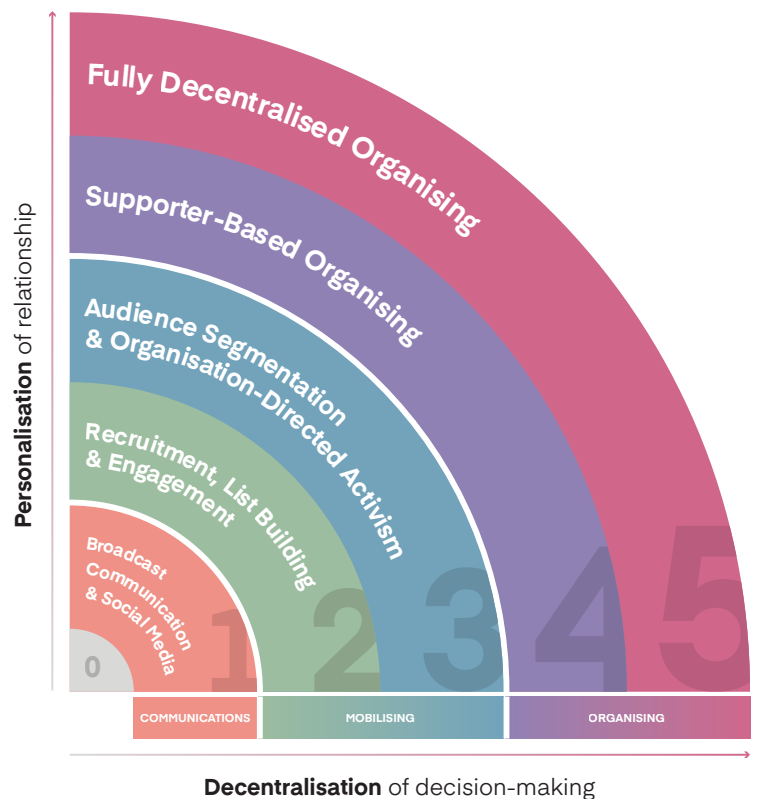


The Five-Part Framework for Digital Organising

The framework we developed at **Tectonica** breaks down the full spectrum of online activities in people-powered efforts to impact political change, and classifies them into five major categories.

The order of these categories is dependent on depth of supporter engagement, beginning with one-way communication, moving through top-down direction, and ending with activists creating strategies and acting autonomously. As decision-making is decentralised, relationships develop and are sustained through the organising activities.



COMMUNICATIONS

1. Broadcast Communication & Social Media:

Using digital messaging tools for one-way communication (such as basic mass email systems and social media announcements, a website that communicates information, etc.).

MOBILISING

2. Recruitment, List Building & Engagement:

Using digital mobilising tools for purposes that include simple two-way communication (conducting list building, petitions and surveys, digital advertising, donation drives, etc.)

3. Audience Segmentation & Organisation-Directed Activism:

Building and scaling relationships with digital technologies, two-way communication that includes listening and tailored responses (segmented email and communications, ladder of engagement which leads to increased level of involvement, etc.)

ORGANISING

4. Supporter-Based Organising:

Digital mobilisation is blended with organising e.g. activists are encouraged to generate their own creative content or organise events around a centrally decided theme on a particular occasion.

5. Fully Decentralised Organising:

Decentralised and self-organising with technology (distributed organising, autonomous group organising, peer2peer organising, etc.). Autonomous groups determine their own strategies and implement them. The organisation uses methods online to be led and accountable to their activists.

The Five-Part Framework for Digital Organising

To understand the framework several key points should be considered:

- **The framework is not structured according to technological tools**, but instead what those tools allow organisers to do.
- **The framework does not measure doing 'more' overall digital activities or 'less' digital activities.** It simply serves to understand the type. It is worthy of note, that running a \$10 boost of a facebook post, is not equal to running a multi-million dollar ad campaign.

What Works to Win?

Undoubtedly some of you tasked with using movement power to make change in the world will be asking, “but which of these techniques actually works to win?”. While the full answer to that question is a discipline on its own which we - and many others - have spent years exploring, we have a number of things which we can say definitively

Where a campaign or organisation should be on this spectrum to have impact is very much a matter of particular strategy specific to that campaign. The earlier part of the scale is certainly more expedient, resource-effective and can have great reach using digital technologies - these activities will raise awareness and keep people informed. The further end of the spectrum tends to take longer to develop, and requires greater investment and human resources. However, it almost certainly has a longer-term impact.

It is also important to note that the early categories on the spectrum lay the necessary groundwork to successfully develop activities further along the spectrum. While getting “stuck” in broadcast communications can seriously limit the success of an organisation, the organisation must first use narrative to communicate the value of being involved in the effort to begin to recruit activists. Subsequently, while many organisations find themselves ‘stuck’ in list building activities like petitions, having a list of interested individuals can be the starting point for identifying and engaging leaders for real distributed organising.

- **This isn't a framework in which the actions of movements and organisations are in one finite place.** In fact, organisation's are likely to be engaging in activities in multiple places along the spectrum, and do not sequentially leave one category when developing another.

In “How Organizations Develop Activists”, Hahrie Han demonstrates that civic organisations most succeed when blending mobilising and organising approaches: “Mobilizing and organizing are mutually reinforcing approaches....To meet the challenges of building power, civic associations need to go broad in their mobilizing and deep in their organizing.”

That said, we've observed that electoral campaigns, with shorter timelines than those of civic organisations, may need to lean more heavily on mobilising than organising - and particularly in such activities as Get Out The Vote (GOTV).

Based upon our years of experience, the more decentralised an approach, the more likely it is to earn a key element to true political impact in today's world: **Trust**. Deep trust within communities tends to be the hallmark key to building successful movements.

Get in touch with us today if you are interested in assessing your own organisation's digital organising activity. - link to contact- And **sign up for the Tectonica Organising Network** for updates, innovations, and developments on digital organising



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