

**PUBLICFIRST** 

# Advocating for R&D investment

*Analysis of what works in campaigning and  
advice for the R&D community*

Part of the R&D Decade project  
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# Foreword

The decade ahead could transform research in the UK. After many years of defending against reduced public investment in R&D, we are finally seeing meaningful steps towards doubled budgets.

But realising this ambitious target means sustaining political support across a decade's worth of fiscal events, elections and economic uncertainties. It means accepting that the advocacy strategies that have brought us this far will be necessary, but not sufficient, to complete our journey. It means building an enduring, active base of public support for R&D to keep our sector politically relevant. Having come so far, we must not lose momentum but refocus on crafting the tools we'll need to sustain research as a political priority.

Based on this imperative, the Campaign for Science and Engineering and Wellcome commissioned policy specialists Public First to objectively review the sector's advocacy options. This report represents their independent findings, designed to help the R&D sector consider what comes next.

Public First have explored the topic with leading advocates from across our community and sought advice from seasoned campaigners in other fields. Their analysis offers us some hard truths as advocates, but also an opportunity to learn from the tactics that have propelled other campaigns to success.

Seizing the opportunities set out in this report will mean the community becoming more comfortable with different styles of advocacy. Our traditional reliance on cold, hard facts and logical arguments has served us well in conversations with HM Treasury, but we'll need to embrace other tactics too, if we're to justify a transformational increase in investment. The community will need to do more to capture the hearts and minds of the public, to embrace emotive reasons as well as logical ones.

It is striking that research is everywhere – its products are in every home and office, and its producers found in towns, cities and field sites across the UK. Research is on people's doorsteps, yet this report talks about its remoteness from the public, and the dangers of appearing elitist and entitled. As a community, we'll need a renewed focus on delivering tangible, tailored advocacy that helps research feel like a priority to more people.

Greater public investment will come coupled to a scale of scrutiny the sector has never experienced before. It will mean competing against other worthy priorities, from the NHS to schools. It will mean the UK spending more on R&D than defending itself as a nation, and we should expect the public to ask why. This report helps us think about how we want to justify that political choice, rather than relying on a continued run of goodwill among key decision-makers.

This report compels our community to consider what our combined advocacy efforts are building towards. The community's diversity is a great asset, but we'll need to work together if we're to better explain why research matters.

We thank all those who've kindly contributed towards this report. It represents the first step on a journey for the whole sector and we look forward to continuing the conversation. With these hard truths laid out in front of us as a community, let's grasp this opportunity with both hands and ready ourselves for an exciting future.

**Ed Whiting**

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# Executive Summary

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At the heart of almost every major change in law, policy, and public opinion is a campaign. The forms and shapes that these campaigns take are almost as diverse as the causes they target. They range from large, loud, and highly visible street protests, to quiet one-to-one conversations behind closed doors.

We were commissioned by Wellcome and the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) to review the evidence base on, and conduct new analysis of, what makes a successful campaign. In doing so we sought to understand which advocacy approaches would most effectively enable the Research and Development community to secure the future of R&D investment. To build an objective view, this report explores:

- The components of a successful campaign.
- How different models of campaigning pursue their goals.
- What the public think about these different types of campaigning.
- How these insights might be applied to a future campaign for investment in R&D.
- Four advocacy models that the R&D community could adopt.
- Our recommendations for a future campaign.

The R&D community has undoubtedly achieved great success with its advocacy. In recent years it has both defended public investment from austerity and secured a cross-party commitment to increase the UK's R&D spending to 2.4% of GDP and beyond over the coming decade.

This report considers whether, and how, the community's advocacy approach needs to change to secure that increase in investment. Based on our evidence gathering, we set out four advocacy models, each of which reflects the need to nurture a broader, deeper, and more active support base for R&D investment.

## Learning from good practice .....

### Our Evidence Base

- **A comprehensive literature review** exploring insights from relevant academic literature in political science, behavioural psychology, and marketing, along with campaign memoirs and how-to guides. The review was conducted with a focus on modes of message development and delivery.<sup>1</sup>
- **One-to-one interviews with senior campaigning professionals** from charities,

political parties, trade unions and trade bodies, asking what they thought worked and why.

- **In-depth profiling of 25 prominent campaigns** spanning the full spectrum of campaigning topics and tactics, from Stronger In to Stonewall's Rainbow Laces.<sup>2</sup>

*All evidence outputs are published in full on the Wellcome and CaSE websites.<sup>3</sup>*

Given the number and diversity of different campaigns, there is a sizeable evidence base on 'what works'. Understanding how and why campaigns from different sectors have been successful (or not) could help the R&D community take an evidence-based approach to designing any future campaign. Chapters 1 and 2 of this report bring together that evidence to identify the eight key tools most regularly deployed by successful campaigns:<sup>4</sup>

1 Tryl et al. (2020). What Makes a Successful Campaign? Literature Review. Retrieved from: <https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/public-first-literature-review.pdf>;

2 Tryl et al. (2020). What Makes a Successful Campaign? 25 Campaign Profiles. Retrieved from: <https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/public-first-25-campaign-profiles.pdf>;

3 Wellcome Trust (2020). The R&D Decade: Making the Case for Government Investment. Retrieved from: <https://wellcome.ac.uk/what-we-do/our-work/our-policy-work-government-investment-research>;

4 Tryl et al. (2020) What Makes a Successful Campaign? Eight Key Tools for a Successful Campaign. Retrieved from: <https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/public-first-eight-key-tools-successful-campaign.pdf>;

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**1. Craft a succinct and clear message.** With the public spending little time actively engaged in current affairs, it is important to have a simple, memorable, message that cuts through.
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**2. Demonstrate large public support.** Demonstrating public support, either online or off, is the most effective way to persuade politicians that an issue will impact them at the ballot box.
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**3. Engage through social media.** The age of social media means that every campaign needs an online presence. It can be over-relied on – but is necessary for broad reach and the rapid demonstration of mass support.
- 

**4. Provide an online toolkit.** Online toolkits allow users to generate their own content for a campaign, giving them more of a stake in the cause. This drives increased engagement and allows content to be shared organically by supporters.
- 

**5. Evoke emotion.** Campaigns which play on emotion have been some of the most successful; sharing personal stories and case studies allows the public to engage with an issue on a more personal level.
- 

**6. Create coalitions.** Where there are campaigns with multiple groups affected by the same issue, working together can help amplify the message, increase reach, and gives access to greater shared resources.
- 

**7. Enlist high profile people and organisations.** Relevant and engaging high profile advocates can help campaigns spread their message to larger networks and more diverse audiences or media outlets.
- 

**8. Secure extensive media engagement.** Traditional media remains a key conduit for a campaign to influence the public and decision makers. It continues to set the agenda for the day; while some forms of circulation are declining, news consumption itself is thriving.

## Public perceptions of campaigns .....

More than anything else, building an impactful campaign means understanding how the public respond to different types of campaigning and how the mode of delivery influences their opinions. In Chapter 2, we share our results from testing different campaign strategies with the public and key insights for a future R&D campaign.

### Our Evidence Base

- **A nationally representative poll of 2,000 people** exploring their reactions to different campaigning approaches and their opinions on R&D spending.
- **Four focus groups** in Watford and Derby to test in detail which campaigns, messengers, and messages most influence the public's thinking.<sup>5</sup>

Firstly, people care most about campaigns on issues that directly affect them and their families, for example cancer campaigns are widely supported by those directly impacted by the disease. People are most likely to support causes where the benefits are tangible and easily understood. This came across strongly in our focus groups, where people engaged with big concepts like climate change through its impact on their, or their children's, lives.

Secondly, the public judge the trustworthiness of information by the authenticity of the messenger, and they value honesty about what might be expected of them to achieve a campaign's goals. We found a hierarchy of who people believe, starting with family and friends, then trustworthy experts, followed by celebrities (but only if they are relevant and knowledgeable). Amid the debate about the role of experts, we found that 55% of people agreed that experts normally know what is best for the country, with just 13% disagreeing. However, 69% of respondents felt that experts had their own agenda when arguing what is best for the country, highlighting the need for visible impartiality when deploying experts as campaign messengers.

Thirdly, our polling exposes a dilemma for campaigners: people say they dislike direct-action campaign tactics, but these tactics are by far the most effective in raising awareness. When we tested levels of recognition across different campaigns, Extinction Rebellion had the highest levels by far – 57% of people had heard of it, while

<sup>5</sup> Tryl et al. (2020). Campaigns, Advocacy and R&D. Opinion Research Report. Retrieved from: <https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/public-first-campaigns-advocacy-rd.pdf>;

most others barely achieved 10% recognition. However, only 23% of respondents said they supported Extinction Rebellion and 44% opposed the campaign. In contrast, a less direct campaign, Rainbow Laces, was supported by 47% of people, but only registered 14% recognition.

Finally, traditional lobbying is extremely unpopular with the public. Even seemingly innocuous forms of briefing politicians - such as organising a dinner or building up relationships with a small number of MPs - would make over a third of respondents more likely to oppose a campaign.

### Classifying successful campaign approaches .....

Bringing together our literature review, opinion research, campaign profiling and interviews, Chapter 3 describes six campaign typologies into which almost all campaigns can be classified:



**The Disrupters:** Grassroots movements that use publicity-generating shock tactics and large demonstrations to raise awareness of injustice e.g. Extinction Rebellion.



**Clicktivism:** Entirely online grassroots campaigns designed to showcase large public support and further galvanise public opinion e.g. Je Suis Charlie.



**Feel Good:** Awareness raising campaigns using positive, emotive messaging with a call to action for supporters linked to a particular event, day or month e.g. The Ice Bucket Challenge.



**Traditional Lobbying:** Elite behind-the-scenes campaigns that target decision makers either directly or through sponsoring events or think tank reports e.g. Financial Industry Lobbying.



**The Strength of Our Argument:** Expert-led campaigns that use logical messaging and systematic evidence to show the strength of their argument e.g. Stronger In.



**This Affects You:** Grassroots campaigns supported by professional ‘organisers’ that aim to mobilise those affected by the campaign’s central proposition, particularly to demonstrate their electoral strength e.g. WASPI.

## Making the public case for R&D .....

Our public opinion research also tested people’s opinion of R&D and investment in it. The key findings, which are outlined in the first half of Chapter 4, are:

- People are broadly aware of what R&D is, with 72% of people saying they at least think they know what it is. However, that awareness is shallow and narrow; when asked to identify what counts as R&D from a list, only 13% answered entirely correctly.
- Medical research is by far the most popular discipline for R&D investment with the public, with 57% of respondents ranking this it among their top three priorities.
- People are proud of the UK’s strengths in R&D and think this should be celebrated. In our poll, 72% of people responded that the UK’s position as a world-leader in R&D made them feel proud and a further 65% believed that the UK should lead the world in R&D.
- People are broadly split on whether the UK invests too much in long-term R&D rather than solving issues that matter now (33% agree vs. 35% disagree). People’s priorities differ by sector, preferring to invest in long-term R&D solutions for challenges linked to the Environment and International Development, and short-term investment in services for Healthcare and Education.

All of this suggests that while a campaign to secure investment in R&D would start from a strong base, much more needs to be done to showcase the breadth of R&D activity and the outcomes of investment. There remains a significant segment of the public who do not think investing in R&D should be a priority. Engaging with this group will mean explaining why investment is not going towards concrete priorities e.g. ‘more nurses’, but rather towards the indirect

but still impactful returns of R&D. To address this scepticism, any campaign for R&D investment should therefore focus on the tangible – jobs and real-life outputs.

## Perspectives within the R&D community .....

To succeed, any new campaigning approach must be one which the R&D community is willing to embrace. Therefore, alongside exploring different types of campaign we conducted an intensive programme of engagement with the R&D community. This engagement tested how the community views its current campaigning efforts, what might need to be done differently, and the levels of comfort with various campaigning approaches. The findings are outlined in Chapter 4.

### Our Evidence Base

- **In depth-interviews with representatives of the R&D community** from industry, charities and academia to gather their views on the current state of R&D campaigning.
- **Four R&D community workshops** bringing different parts of the community together to explore potential advocacy approaches.

While there was broad agreement that the community had done well to secure the 2.4% commitment, there were real concerns about whether current advocacy efforts were sufficient to see that commitment realised. Many in the community recognised a need to engage the public, as well as decision-makers, on the importance of research investment. However, that view was not universal, and our discussions uncovered a series of tensions within the sector that would need to be explored and, if resolved, would lead to a stronger campaign. Questions to consider include:

- Whether a campaign should make use of already well-understood and appreciated areas of R&D, such as medical research, or aim to showcase the full diversity of R&D activity, including the arts and social sciences.
- How a campaign for R&D should engage with the concept of ‘place’ given the current political focus on ‘levelling up’ and the disconnect between R&D spending and everyday life for many of those outside the major R&D hubs, such as Edinburgh and the Golden Triangle.

- How to dispel the ‘ivory tower’ image of R&D as an elite-only discipline conducted by a community who don’t reflect the society around them.
- Whether the R&D community feels able to deploy arguments that they don’t themselves instinctively find convincing. For instance, given that the public are proud that the UK is a world-leader in R&D, there is obvious scope for a campaign that draws on national, regional or local pride.
- How different parts of the sector can be encouraged to make the case for each other in R&D spending, rather than just pursuing their own interests.
- Whether more optimism and excitement around R&D investment is necessary, or whether the sector should consider a more negative tone if commitments to invest are not being met.
- Whether the best advocates for the sector are the participants or the beneficiaries of research.
- How a campaign which seeks to unite the R&D community can avoid defaulting to the lowest common denominator and have sufficient independence to be nimble and impactful.

### How can the R&D community evolve its advocacy? .....

Chapter 5 is the culmination of the analysis outlined in the report, combining findings from the literature review, campaign profiling, expert interviews, public opinion research, and R&D community engagement. It considers the issues and tensions that have been exposed, as well as the current public perceptions of R&D, to propose four advocacy models for a decade long campaign to secure R&D investment. For each of these approaches a new entity would need to be established in order to provide the infrastructure to sustain a major decade long campaign. Beyond that, the models are illustrative and certainly not mutually exclusive, they outline a set of advocacy pathways that a future campaign for R&D could adopt.

## Approach 1:



# Build popular support for research investment

**Assumption:** The best way to build enduring political support for R&D spending is by building public support.

**Aim:** Build an attractive, tangible image of R&D in the public's mind, and firmly connect this to investment.

This public campaign would target those who are less engaged by R&D to persuade them of the benefits of R&D investment to their lives. It would mean a major shift in the sector's usual campaigning approach to focus on championing the promise and tangible outputs of R&D, rather than relying on economic arguments that only resonate with HM Treasury. This campaign would be managed by a new agency dedicated to training a diverse range of R&D communicators who can make the case for investment. They would be supported by those who have benefited directly from R&D, such as patients or business owners.

### What this might look like:

A new communications fellowship to intensively train and promote a team of advocates for R&D investment.

Collaborating with mainstream media to embed research and its outputs in story lines for popular entertainment shows, for example EastEnders.

## Approach 2:



## An R&D think tank

**Assumption:** The most effective way to secure R&D investment is to directly influence key decision-makers.

**Aim:** Build a robust evidence base for R&D investment that aligns with the current political agenda.

This campaign would build a more extensive, more targeted and more up-to-date central evidence base for R&D investment, and uses this to show how R&D aligns with emerging political priorities such as the 'levelling up' agenda. The campaign would provide authoritative commentary on political events, perhaps co-ordinating a sector-wide response to key 'moments' such as Budgets and manifesto launches, as well as providing evidence-led rebuttals of media or commentator attacks on R&D. Rather than supplanting existing lobbying efforts across the community, the campaign would look to support existing influential organisations and advocates who have credibility with decision-makers.

### What this might look like:

The creation of fresh evidence showing how R&D investment is benefiting each UK constituency in terms of jobs, other economic benefits and tangible research outputs.

Developing a portfolio of evidence that links the benefits of R&D to political 'hot topics', such as the levelling up agenda.

### Approach 3:



## Activism

**Assumption:** To guarantee R&D investment, it must be politically unattractive to take any other course of action.

**Aim:** Mobilise vocal advocates for R&D to make the case for investment.

This campaign would engage those who care passionately about R&D to make their voice heard through rallies, petitions, and other visible demonstrations of support. Alongside individuals, this approach would build specific coalitions within politically prominent groups, such as small businesses to advocate for change. The campaign would create online toolkits for supporters to engage in their own campaign activity. It would provide trained organisers to build grassroots support for research investment, who in turn upskill others to recruit and mobilise additional supporters. This campaign could also use high-profile advocates such as celebrities, as long as they are relevant to the cause.

### What this might look like:

Online toolkits that give activists for R&D the opportunity to create their own content about why R&D investment matters to them.

A network of research advocates across the country who work to build grassroots support in their communities for R&D investment.

## Approach 4:



# Devolved campaigning

**Assumption:** Individual institutions are the best advocates for their own work.

**Aim:** Support institutions, especially smaller ones, to tell their story to the public and politicians in the most coordinated and effective way.

This campaign would coordinate and amplify different voices from within the R&D community. It would create a central theme or slogan that can act as a scaffold for the advocacy efforts of individual R&D organisations. By offering training and templates, this campaign would empower businesses, charities and universities to make their own case for R&D, rather than doing so itself. The central campaign would also take on the role of showcasing and amplifying the work of individual organisations – for instance by mapping the footprint of R&D across the country.

### What this might look like:

The creation of an evidence-based 'how to' guide for R&D organisations, describing how to most effectively showcase and tailor their work to different audiences, from their local community to national decision-makers.

A national campaign on what research investment has done for the UK, profiling examples from different local institutions throughout the year.

## Taking the next step .....

A future campaign could seek to incorporate one, some, or all of these models with the aim of building durable support for R&D investment over the long term. Now more than ever politicians and decision-makers are guided by public opinion, particularly when it comes to prioritising spending. That means that the clear and dispassionate case for investment that the R&D community have deployed so successfully, may now need to be complemented with an approach more suited to winning over a mass audience.

To identify this new approach, the community must continue to gather and analyse evidence on what works, and embrace an experimental approach to making its case. Successfully connecting with a broader audience would nurture a support base for R&D investment which relies less on the interests of the Government of the day, and instead flows from an expectation of the public at large.

# Chapter 1: What is a campaign?

## Chapter 1

# What is a campaign?

In this chapter we use our research findings from the literature review to explore what a campaign is, how campaigns are developed, and what techniques they use to convey their message.

Throughout this report, we take a broad definition of a campaign as a series of activities carried out to persuade another group of people to produce a particular outcome.

The first step for any campaign is setting the desired outcome: what are the campaign's aims and goals. That outcome may change as a campaign progresses, more information is gathered, or the context around the campaign shifts, but the most effective campaigns set out with a clear, tangible objective. Failure to do so makes campaign development much harder, and prevents campaigners from assessing how well the campaign is performing.

With an objective decided, there are three key steps in campaign development:



1. **Research the message.** Once a campaign's objective is finalised, campaigners must begin crafting their message. The first step is conducting public opinion research to understand the current baseline opinion on that objective, issues surrounding the campaign, and competing arguments. This stage also allows campaigners to identify who is 'persuadable' and how 'persuadable' they are, helping to identify the target audience.



2. **Develop the message.** Once the campaigner understands who the target audience is and what they believe, they can begin to develop the message. This could take the form of visual media, an argument, a slogan, or a broad set of language for campaigners to use. It should take account of human psychology, including existing biases, the role of emotion, and the time-frame of the campaign.



- 3. Deliver the message.** Finally, the campaigner must consider how best to deliver the message, and who the messenger should be. Public opinion research and campaign profiling will reveal the most appropriate platforms to reach the target audience, and which spokespeople are likely to be most effective for a specific campaign.

During each stage, there are several tools and techniques that campaigns use. These are explored in each of the following sections.

## Researching the message .....

Opinion research deepens campaigners' understanding of who their target audience is and how they feel about the issue at hand. It allows campaigners to look for specific groups who may be open to changing their views, and to identify messages which have the potential to do so. There are three main ways to assess public opinion on an issue: polling, focus groups and social listening, each with their own merits.



### 1. Polling

Polling is typically done via the distribution of questionnaires to a preselected panel, although occasionally members of the public are selected randomly. Samples are designed to be representative by incorporating people proportionally from all demographic groups.

Polling can reveal how views vary by demographic, indicating where and with whom certain messages are popular. This allows for more effective targeting of audiences, either at a broad (e.g. the North East) or a more micro- (e.g. young women in a specific city in the North East) level. Polling allows researchers to analyse the interaction between apparently unrelated viewpoints, which can reveal surprising findings. These sorts of findings allow campaigners to capitalise on unexpected links between issues, to hone their messaging or delivery.

*“We use things like polling in the first instance when building campaigns to understand public support – but also to highlight where they stand on a topic. It is incredibly useful.”*

*- Emma Greenwood, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Cancer Research UK*



## 2. Focus Groups

Qualitative research from focus groups and interviews are equally important in campaign development.

Rather than testing rigidly formulated hypotheses, focus groups are most useful for shaping these hypotheses throughout the research process by engaging with the public as participants early on.

Focus groups build on polling results because they allow campaigners to probe why people feel a certain way and test the depth of people's support and understanding, in a way a poll cannot. The conversational nature of focus groups also allows campaigners to uncover unexpected insights and answers to questions they had not thought to ask.



## 3. Social Listening

Depending on how participants are recruited, both online polling and focus groups can have problems with the self-selection of respondents. This can result

in obvious biases, such as excluding those without internet access, or more subtle biases, such as underrepresenting those who are less politically engaged.

One way to minimise sample bias is with 'social listening'. With a wealth of publicly available data online through social media sites, researchers can effectively assess public opinion without ever asking a question. This can be done in a qualitative way: engaging with the comment sections of relevant articles or blogs to understand what people perceive to be the main issues in a given area. Or it can be performed in a quantitative fashion: monitoring social media posts with keywords and assessing whether the content is positive or negative, or with algorithms designed to calculate sentiment and perform language analysis. By gathering this data, campaigners can begin to understand where the public opinion stands on an issue and how their campaign can fit into this context. Of course, social listening involves biases of its own; not everyone is on social media, and social listening will inevitably exclude a portion of the population.

### Issues with opinion research

Opinion research is also affected by the fact that certain people systematically under-report their opinions. People who are anxious and have low self-esteem are more likely to self-censor and hide their true opinions. There is also a small, but statistically significant correlation between people being more willing to share an opinion

if they believe that others hold that opinion too, which means unpopular or low-status opinions are harder to find. Equally, people will often offer opinions on subjects which they do not know or care about. People who do not have firm opinions on a subject will skew the information an opinion researcher receives.

## Developing the message .....

While opinion research methods can help campaigners understand which messages resonate, these messages must be developed with an understanding of human psychology. Messages are designed to influence some members of the public or increase awareness, and it is important to understand how to be persuasive and memorable.

While the content of the message depends on the context of the campaign, we have used evidence from behavioural science literature to identify a set of key considerations which can help ensure the message is framed effectively:



### 1. Loss aversion

Behavioural science research suggests that people place more value on something they stand to lose, versus an equally-sized gain.<sup>6</sup> For example, when working out the perceived value of £100 gained compared to £100 lost, people tend to place much more value on the money which they are losing.

For campaigning, people are likely to be more concerned by information about the losses of inaction rather than the gains of action. For instance, environmental campaigning that focuses on the personal benefits people will gain from reducing emissions is likely to be less successful than one focused on the damage to personal and family health of not acting to reduce them.



### 2. Temporal influence

Campaigns must understand how people are influenced by the gap between the present and the time at which a 'reward' is received. In general, people discount the perceived value of things being received in the future, and typically prefer immediate rewards. Interestingly, this discount effect appears hyperbolic, meaning that changing a delay from 1 year to 10 years may substantially shift people's opinion, but changing it from 10 to 20 years may have little effect. This is relevant for

6 Camerer, C. (2005) Three cheers – psychological, theoretical, empirical – for loss-aversion, *Journal of marketing research*, 42(2), 129-133.

campaigns that centre around the promise of future reward; evidence suggests one way to diminish this effect is to use dates instead of days (i.e. 1st June instead of 120 days' time).<sup>7</sup>

The literature also indicates that people think about the future in a more abstract way than near term events. People tend to care about the 'why' more than the practical 'how' for things in the future, while the reverse is true for imminent events.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that long-term campaigns should first focus on convincing people why their message is important, and later focus on explaining how the campaign's goals will be achieved. For example, a decade-long campaign to implement a high-speed rail project should first focus on explaining why communities need the project before later explaining how it will be paid for and built.



### 3. Emotional appeals

Emotional appeals can be powerful but must be deployed in the correct context. For example, people say that they support positive messages, however they seem to be the least memorable. Negative messages, on the other hand, may increase awareness but excessively negative campaigns can decrease support. For example, the restaurant chain Gourmet Burger Kitchen launched a series of adverts in 2016 mocking vegans and vegetarians, with slogans such as “Vegetarians, resistance is futile,” and “You’ll always remember when you gave up being vegetarian.” The adverts sparked an immediate outcry, with #gourmetmurderkitchen trending on Twitter and complaints made to the Advertising Standard Agency. As a result, the adverts were dropped after just two days.<sup>9</sup>

Research suggests that the impact of different types of emotional appeals varies across demographics; for example, positive emotional messages are most effective with older people<sup>10</sup> and more extraverted individuals.<sup>11</sup>

*“...a positive message was key – love our colleges. It was a compromise phrase but less objectionable than something harder edged”*

- David Hughes, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

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7 DeHart, W. B., & Odum, A. L. (2015). The effects of the framing of time on delay discounting. *Journal of the experimental analysis of behavior*, 103(1), 10-21.

8 Kim, H., Rao, A. R., & Lee, A. Y. (2009). It's time to vote: The effect of matching message orientation and temporal frame on political persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(6), 877-889.

9 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/shopping-and-consumer-news/12105935/Gourmet-Burger-Kitchen-ad-campaign-sparks-angry-backlash-from-vegetarians.html>

10 Williams, P., & Drolet, A. (2005). Age-related differences in responses to emotional advertisements. *Journal of consumer research*, 32(3), 343-354.

11 Sharma, A. (2017). A Study of Consumer Attitudes towards Advertising Appeals Used in Television Commercials.

Negative emotional messaging uses fear, anxiety and anger to mobilise people or create behaviour change,<sup>12</sup> though evidence suggests that excessive use of these negative emotional appeals may lead the audience to dismiss the message entirely.<sup>13</sup>

However, as a caveat to these findings is that people are largely bad at predicting and remembering their emotional experiences, and therefore it is difficult to judge the true impact of emotional appeals.<sup>14</sup>

Regardless, it is important that campaigners understand how their target audience responds to different types of emotional appeals when crafting their message, so they can effectively use positive or negative tones to build support and mobilise action.



#### 4. Using statistics

Many campaigns use statistics to further a position or prove a point. However, these statistics are often misunderstood by the public and distrusted. Measures should be taken to make statistics clearer to people, for example using visual data or frequency presentations such as '1 in 100' rather than 1%.<sup>15</sup>

Evidence shows that people often fail to engage with the scale of large numbers, unless they are placed in context. Therefore, it is important to contextualise any statistics and make them tangible. In global warming campaigns for example, putting a 1°C rise in global temperatures into context would help illustrate the long-term negative effects of a number that on its own sounds small.



#### 5. Bandwagon Effect

People often align their support with the perceived majority position; this is often presented as the 'Bandwagon Effect'. For example, when encouraging energy-saving habits researchers found that messages about how an individual's neighbours are reducing their energy use were more effective than financial incentives.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, campaigns may wish

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12 Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., Banks, A. J., & Davis, A. K. (2008). Is a worried citizen a good citizen? Emotions, political information seeking, and learning via the internet. *Political Psychology*, 29(2), 247-273.

13 Elder, R. W., Shults, R. A., Sleet, D. A., Nichols, J. L., Thompson, R. S., Rajab, W., & Task Force on Community Preventive Services. (2004). Effectiveness of mass media campaigns for reducing drinking and driving and alcohol-involved crashes: a systematic review. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 27(1), 57-65.

14 Meyvis, T., Ratner, R. K., & Levav, J. (2010). Why don't we learn to accurately forecast feelings? How misremembering our predictions blinds us to past forecasting errors. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 139(4), 579.

15 Gigerenzer, G., & Hoffrage, U. (1995). How to improve Bayesian reasoning without instruction: frequency formats. *Psychological review*, 102(4), 684.

16 Jachimowicz, J. M., Hauser, O. P., O'Brien, J. D., Sherman, E., & Galinsky, A. D. (2018). The critical role of second-order normative beliefs in predicting energy conservation. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2(10), 757-764.

to link their message with an idea, issue, or message with existing widespread public support, or to highlight how many other people already support the principles behind the campaign.



## 6. Status quo

People are biased towards the status quo and tend to resist a change to their current circumstances or opinion. If a change is complicated, at least in its expression, then you are likely to see more of a status quo bias.<sup>17</sup> This can present a major obstacle to messages seeking to inspire change.

Bias towards the status quo is also seen when challenging an individual's existing beliefs. Individuals are known to consistently seek out or interpret information in a way that confirms their pre-existing beliefs ('Confirmation Bias').<sup>18</sup> Campaigns which seek to change people's views face an uphill battle, but can consider presenting their argument in a novel way so as to make it appear that it doesn't conflict with prior beliefs. The Vote Leave campaign did this effectively during the Brexit referendum. To overcome bias towards the status quo, the campaign framed the referendum as a choice between two different futures, of which Leave was presented as the safer option.<sup>19</sup>



## 7. Memorability

The long-term impacts of a campaign are often dependent on memorability, which is measured by the level of audience comprehension and retention of a message. This is extremely important because memorable messages have been proven to lead to behaviour change.<sup>20</sup>

Campaigners can improve the memorability of their messages by ensuring they are unique,<sup>21</sup> or concrete. Concrete language refers to words that are available to the senses – things we can see, hear, smell, touch, or taste. Research shows that messages that use concrete language, such as 'white horse' are more memorable than those that use abstract language, such as 'freedom', 'truth' or

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17 Boxall, P., Adamowicz, W. L., & Moon, A. (2009). Complexity in choice experiments: choice of the status quo alternative and implications for welfare measurement. *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 53(4), 503-519.

18 Nickerson, R. S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of general psychology*, 2(2), 175-220.

19 Atikan, E., Nadeau, R., & Bélanger, E. (2020). Framing Risky Choices: Brexit and the Dynamics of High-Stakes Referendums, <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=46TgDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA239&lpg=PA239&dq=overcoming+status+quo+bias+campaigns&source=bl&ots=l41DLPr0af&sig=ACfU3U3i65Rd-Bgs1cYoun7A11l07q3twA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjDuuWl4KvpAhWBoFwKHQFUBccQ6AEwDxoECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=status%20quo&f=false>

20 Smith, S. W., Nazione, S., LaPlante, C., Kotowski, M. R., Atkin, C., Skubisz, C. M., & Stohl, C. (2009). Topics and sources of memorable breast cancer messages and their impact on prevention and detection behaviors. *Journal of Health Communication*, 14 (3), 293–307.

21 Moscovitch, M., & Craik, F. I. (1976). Depth of processing, retrieval cues, and uniqueness of encoding as factors in recall. *Journal of verbal learning and verbal Behavior*, 15(4), 447-458.

'love'.<sup>22</sup> Research also shows the effectiveness of using cues, which can be either explicit, for example, a colour or logo, or more subtle environmental cues, for example, people are better at recalling things they learned while intoxicated if they are currently intoxicated.<sup>23</sup>

One example of a memorable message is from the UK's National Aids Awareness campaign, which displayed the word 'Aids' on a tombstone followed by the slogan 'don't die of ignorance.' The message was striking and unambiguous, and although it was met with some complaints at the time, it has since been hailed as one of the most successful Aids awareness campaigns in history. According to the BBC, this bold message increased public awareness of the disease around the world.<sup>24</sup>



## 8. Context

Campaigns do not exist in a vacuum, and a campaign's target audience may receive many different messages simultaneously. A successful campaign must understand how these alternative messages may inadvertently change the way in which the campaign's message is received or interpreted.

For example, one study showed that when individuals were asked to choose between two properties, one closer to town but run-down, one further away but in good condition, people were split 50/50. However, when a third option was added, right in the centre of town and in a terrible condition, 66% of the participants chose the closer to town option. This effect was observed even if they were told the town-centre property was unavailable.<sup>25</sup> This was termed the 'compromise effect' and is highly relevant to those seeking to change consumer behaviour.

## Delivering the message .....

When it comes to delivering the message, campaigns must consider two important factors: who should deliver it (the messenger) and how they should deliver it (the medium). In this section, we will explore these aspects individually, incorporating findings from the literature review, public opinion research and expert interviews.

22 Sadoski, M., Goetz, E. T., & Rodriguez, M. (2000). Engaging texts: Effects of concreteness on comprehensibility, interest, and recall in four text types. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(1), 85.

23 Weingartner, H., Adefris, W., Eich, J. E., & Murphy, D. L. (1976). Encoding-imagery specificity in alcohol state-dependent learning. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, 2(1), 83.

24 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15886670>

25 Simonson, I. (1989). Choice based on reasons: The case of attraction and compromise effects. *Journal of consumer research*, 16(2), 158-174.

## Messenger

Campaigns rely on convincing spokespeople to deliver their message. Different spokespeople are useful in different contexts, but authenticity, trustworthiness and competence are common characteristics of any effective spokesperson. Here we explore the role of different types of messengers.



### 1. Experts

There have been claims that recent contemporary politics, especially the Brexit campaigns, have caused the public to lose trust in experts.<sup>26</sup> However, these claims do not seem to be supported by the literature or our public opinion research. According to the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer, 80% of British citizens trust scientists, nearly double the amount that trust Government leaders (42%),<sup>27</sup> while a 2019 study found a broadly positive public attitude towards experts across the EU and UK.<sup>28</sup> This trust in experts appears to have been heightened by the context of the coronavirus, as will be discussed later in this report.

Evidence suggests that experts may only be appropriate for certain types of campaigns; one 2006 study showed that consumers prefer expert endorsement to celebrity endorsement for “high technology” products.<sup>29</sup> However, another study indicated that people trust fellow consumers over experts for product endorsements.<sup>30</sup> This may be because people see other consumers as impartial, whereas experts may be perceived as having their own agenda.



### 2. Influencers/Celebrities

High-profile celebrities can help spread a message rapidly to large social networks, but can undermine a campaign if they are not seen in a favourable light by the audience, or if they are seen as supporting a cause to which they are not relevant.

The literature suggests that celebrity endorsements work, but with caveats. One 2016 study analysed the impact of Angelina Jolie’s New

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26 Tett, G. (2016) Why we no longer trust the experts. *Financial Times*, Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/24035fc2-3e45-11e6-9f2c-36b487ebd80a>

27 Edelman (2020) Edelman Trust Barometer 2020. Available at: <https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatus191/files/2020-01/2020%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report.pdf>

28 Dommett, K., Pearce, W. (2019) What do we know about public attitudes towards experts? Reviewing survey data in the United Kingdom and European Union. *Public Understanding of Science*. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0963662519852038>

29 Biswas, D., Biswas, A., Das, N. (2006) The Differential Effects of Celebrity and Expert Endorsements on Consumer Risk Perceptions: The Role of Consumer Knowledge, Perceived Congruency, and Product Technology Orientation. *Journal of Advertising*, 35(2), 17-31.

30 Wang, A. (2005) The Effects of Expert and Consumer Endorsements on Audience Response. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 45(4), 402-412.

York Times editorial on breast cancer screening and her preventive mastectomy on actual consumer behaviour in the following weeks.<sup>31</sup> The study found that the editorial increased test rates; the two weeks following publication saw a 64% increase in the number of daily tests.

However, one recent study found that celebrity endorsements only have positive effects if the celebrity is both familiar and favourable,<sup>32</sup> so campaigns should use influencers who are well-known and liked among their target audience, as well as relevant to their cause.<sup>33</sup>

Celebrities who are seen as irrelevant, or who aren't liked by a campaign's audience, can actively undermine a campaign. This can be seen in Coca Cola's "Four Pack" campaign for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games, which hired American figure skater Michelle Kwan as one their four brand ambassadors.<sup>34</sup> While Kwan was a highly popular figure, her support for a company selling sugary soft drinks was seen as completely at odds with her role on the President's Council on Fitness, Sport and Nutrition, which specifically encouraged the public to "Drink water instead of sugary drinks". This conflict of interest was damaging to the campaign and ultimately led to calls for Kwan to step down from her position as a Coca Cola brand ambassador.

Online influencers such as vloggers have a smaller following than some celebrities but are seen as more authentic and trustworthy.<sup>35</sup> This can make them more effective as spokespeople than mainstream celebrities, particularly for more targeted audiences.



### 3. Everyday People

The literature and public opinion research suggest that people tend to trust a "person like myself" over celebrities, politicians or experts.

*"We did peer to peer campaigning – with early adopter principals pushing their reluctant peers"*

– David Hughes, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

In advertising, using "real people" as opposed to actors is becoming more commonplace for example, the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty.<sup>36</sup> Research shows that people in advertisements with

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31 Desai, S., Jena, A. (2016). Do celebrity endorsements matter? Observational study of BRCA gene testing and mastectomy rates after Angelina Jolie's New York Times editorial. *The BMJ*, 1-4.

32 Jackson, D. (2018). The Effects of Celebrity Endorsements of Ideas and Presidential Candidates. *The Journal of Political Marketing*, 17(4), 301-321.

33 Knoll, J., Matthes, J. (2017). The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements: a meta-analysis. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45, 55-75.

34 Jacobson, M. (2014). Kwan Should Stop Spinning for Coke. *Huffington Post*, Available at: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/healthy-living-news\\_b\\_4652136](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/healthy-living-news_b_4652136)

35 Janssen, L., Schouten, A., Verspaget, M. (2019). Celebrity vs. Influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and Product-Endorser fit. *International Journal of Advertising, The Review of Marketing Communications*, 39 (2), 258-281

36 Smith, R. (2019). The Importance of Realms of Understanding in Marketing Communication, *International Journal of Technology for Business*, 1(2), 9-15.

asymmetrical faces, freckles, or moles are perceived as more genuine and 'real', resulting in more positive attitudes towards an advertisement and the brand.<sup>37</sup>

However, 'everyday people' obviously lack the existing following and reach of celebrities and experts. Therefore, campaigns may find it helpful to balance different types of spokespeople such that they benefit from the reach and audience of celebrities, the knowledge and credibility of experts, and the authenticity and relatability of everyday people.



#### 4. Coalitions

Coalitions can expand a campaign's reach and audience, provide insights into the successes and failures of similar campaigns, and give the campaign's message more credibility. However, building a coalition alone isn't enough to influence policy. Rather, the coalition must deploy other methods like lobbying and raising public awareness; they must be able to draw on their membership for resources, or be adequately staffed, funded and able to undertake these activities.

A systematic review of different coalitions determined that to be successful they needed the ability to: lead and organise stakeholders; adapt to changes; manage resources efficiently; and have the technical capacity to implement the necessary functions.<sup>38</sup> Diverse coalitions representing a broad base of support have the potential to pool the most varied resources and have the furthest reach. However, member diversity should be driven by the goals of the coalition, which may require a narrower membership in order to be nimble.

#### Medium

A campaign's chosen medium, or mediums, must deliver the right message to the right people. Some of the most important mediums to consider are:



#### 1. Social media

Social media provides new ways to reach audiences quickly and cheaply. It is now expected that all campaigns engage with social media to some extent.

*"Our campaigns often make use of WhatsApp groups and*

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<sup>37</sup> Ilicic, J., Baxter, S., Kulczynski, A. (2018). Spot the difference: examining facial characteristics that enhance spokesperson effectiveness, *European Journal of Marketing*, 52(1/2), 348-366.

<sup>38</sup> Raynor, J. (2011). What Makes an Effective Coalition? The California Endowment. Retrieved from: [http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/What\\_Makes\\_an\\_Effective\\_Coalition\\_by\\_TCC\\_Group.pdf](http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/What_Makes_an_Effective_Coalition_by_TCC_Group.pdf)

*other rapid communication networks. They are so useful in really quickly getting your message out and then shared, as well as organising and getting people together.”*

– Stuart Fegan, National Officer, GMB Union

A 2010 study showed that a successful social media campaign needs to develop a relationship between the campaigner and the target audience. The study explains that consumers are more likely to respond to a campaign message if they can interact with it. Therefore, the most effective way to use social media as a medium is as a platform for two-sided conversations, rather than a one-sided broadcast. Successful campaigns allow consumers to share and contribute to the message and form online communities.<sup>39</sup>

*“We had things like twibbons and other things people could have on their profiles. It helps immensely to build that community online – seeing people you know thinking the same as you.”*

– Mike Galsworthy, Programme Director, Scientists for EU

With a growing number of social media platforms, it is important to choose channels based on the behaviour of the target audience. Some of the most popular platforms are: blogs (Tumblr, WordPress, Medium), YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, each of which engage a different demographic in a different way.<sup>40</sup> For example, LinkedIn users have higher incomes and are more likely to be university educated, Pinterest has more women users, and Snapchat and Instagram are disproportionately used by under-30s.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, campaigns must be aware that social media engagement may only offer insight into the views of a narrow population, and also that online support does not necessarily translate to offline action.

When using social media, it is important to consider the widespread public distrust in information on these platforms due to the emergence and prevalence of ‘fake news’. Data shows that social media is the least trusted data source by the public, with only 39% of people trusting news from this source to be true.<sup>42</sup> A recent study by the Pew Research Center found that the social media sites least trusted by the public are Facebook (59% distrust), Twitter (48% distrust) and Instagram (42% distrust).<sup>43</sup>

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39 Moran, E., & Gossieaux, F. (2010). Marketing in a hyper-social world: The tribalization of business study and characteristics of successful online communities. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 50 (3), 232-239.

40 Castronovo, C., Huang, L. (2012). Social Media in an Alternative Marketing Communication Model. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 6(1), 117- 134.

41 Social Media Use in 2018 (2018), Pew Research Centre; Internet and Technology

42 Edelman, R. (2020). Twenty Years of Trust. Retrieved from: <https://www.edelman.com/20yearsoftrust/>

43 Jurkowitz, M., & Mitchell, A. (2020). An oasis of bipartisanship: Republicans and Democrats distrust social media sites for political and election news. Retrieved from: <https://www.journalism.org/2020/01/29/an-oasis-of-bipartisanship-republicans-and-democrats-distrust-social-media-sites-for->



## 2. Traditional media

Campaigns still rely on traditional media despite long-term declines in trust of the media among the public.

Mirroring international trends,<sup>44</sup> recent YouGov polling has shown that the British public's trust in the press to tell the truth has fallen, with less than half believing BBC news journalists are honest and impartial.<sup>45</sup>

However, traditional media is still a low cost but extremely effective method to raise the profile of an issue. Studies have shown that while mass media campaigns may not be able to directly change behaviour in most instances, they can affect knowledge and awareness which in turn contributes to longer term outcomes.<sup>46</sup>

*“The 6pm news bulletin and the 10pm bulletin might be the only thing people check in on in a day. So you’ve got to try and own it. But with social media, things like securing that traditional press coverage is changing in importance. It’s multi-channel now.”*

- Senior Conservative Campaigner, General Election 2019

When working with journalists and newspapers, the audience matters. Audiences for newspapers are split on demographics<sup>47</sup> but, more usefully, they are split on opinion<sup>48</sup> and the content they read every day. By tying a key campaign message into what is already in the paper, readers are more likely to be familiar with the topic and could be more receptive to the campaign's messages.



## 3. Rallies/demonstrations

Rallies and demonstrations are effective ways to demonstrate widespread, grassroots support and strengthen a campaign.<sup>49</sup> However, these tactics must

be deployed carefully, as bold and more disruptive demonstrations can alienate people and ultimately reduce support for a campaign. The literature that we reviewed suggests that large and moderate protests are seen to have a positive effect on achieving the campaign

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political-and-election-news/

44 Edelman (2017). 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer. Retrieved from: <https://www.edelman.com/trust2017>

45 Ibbetson, C. (2019). Do Britons trust the press? Retrieved from: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2019/12/16/do-britons-trust-press>

46 Stead, M., Angus, K., Langley, T., Katikireddi, S. V., Hinds, K., Hilton, S., ... & Bauld, L. (2019). Mass media to communicate public health messages in six health topic areas: a systematic review and other reviews of the evidence. Public Health Research.

47 Taylor, H. (2017). UK Newspapers Reveal Readership Demographics. Retrieved from: <https://www.inter-media.co.uk/uk-newspapers-reveal-readership-demographics/>

48 McCarthy, N. (2017). General election voting by newspaper readership. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/chart/9897/general-election-voting-by-newspaper-readership/>

49 American Enterprise Institute (2012) Do political protests matter? Evidence from the Tea Party movement. Retrieved from: <https://www.aei.org/research-products/working-paper/do-political-protests-matter-evidence-from-the-tea-party-movement/>

aims;<sup>50</sup> however, they may not be as effective at raising awareness as more disruptive or even violent demonstrations.

There is some evidence that protests only work when they receive mass media attention, otherwise they will have little to no impact.<sup>51</sup> Daniel Gillion explores the factors that contribute to successful demonstrations in his book on minority activism, and finds that the following factors all contribute to the potential success of a demonstration.<sup>52</sup>

- It lasts more than a day;
- Has more than 100 people;
- Police are present;
- Political organisations are attached to the protest;
- There were injuries/arrests/property damage.

During the campaign profiling we found that most of these factors are present in Extinction Rebellion protests and may contribute to Extinction Rebellion's high recognition rates as a campaign. However, these same factors may also contribute to the campaign's polarising nature and low public support.

More moderate protests, such as the School Cuts campaign's march on Downing Street generated less media attention, however they also avoided alienating members of the public and decreasing support for the campaign.



#### 4. Grassroots lobbying

Grassroots lobbying tactics, such as petitions and letters to MPs, can be effective in demonstrating the scale and segmentation of a campaign to politicians.

These must be organised effectively, with a clear message, to maximise their impact.

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50 McAdam, D., Su, Y. (2002) The War at Home: Antiwar Protests and Congressional Voting, 1965 to 1973. *American Sociological Review*, 67(5), 696-721. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3088914?seq=1>

51 Walgrave, S., Vilegenthart, R. (2012) The Complex Agenda-Setting Power of Protest: Demonstrations, Media, Parliament, Government, and Legislation in Belgium, 1993-2000. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 17(2), 129-156. Retrieved from: <https://meridian.allenpress.com/mobilization/article-abstract/17/2/129/82427/The-Complex-Agenda-Setting-Power-of-Protest?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

52 Gillion, D. (2013) *The Political Power of Protest: Minority Activism and Shifts in Public Policy* (Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics). Cambridge University Press.

*“The very nature of our whole campaign came from the grassroots. It started in neighbourhoods and communities right across London and then developed. That gave it credibility – this was real and had proper public backing and civil society leadership from the bottom up.”*

– Katherine Chapman, Director, Living Wage Foundation

A successful example of this tactic from the campaigns we profiled was the ‘Raise the Rate’ campaign led by Sixth Form Colleges Associations. This campaign encouraged participants to send letters to Parliamentarians calling on them to raise the funding rate for sixth form students. Twelve associations representing school and college staff and students also wrote letters to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging him to increase funding. As a result of the campaign, the Government announced that it was considering the requested change.

Petitions are another effective tool for grassroots lobbying; if a petition is signed by more than 10,000 people they must receive a response from Government on the subject, and if it is signed by more than 100,000 people the subject is considered for debate in Parliament, which can lead to real policy change. One extremely successful example of a petition was Hugh’s Fish Fight, a campaign to change EU rules on fishing discard. This petition received more than 900,000 signatures – it got the issue in front of decision makers, displayed large public support, and ultimately helped achieve the campaign’s aims.

However, volume alone is not enough to guarantee the success of a campaign. Many decision makers deliberately ignore representations that come from mass mailing campaigns and often question the commitment of those who simply pressed a button to send a template email.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, campaigns should encourage supporters to participate in an authentic and organic way rather than relying on mass mailing techniques.

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<sup>53</sup> Third Sector, (2014). Analysis: Lobbying and mass emails – effective or irritating. Retrieved from: <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/analysis-lobbying-mass-emails-effective-irritating/policy-and-politics/article/1229598>



## What have we learned about developing and delivering a campaign?

Campaign development involves identifying your goals, testing and developing messages, and finally delivering those messages. Successful campaigns incorporate insights from psychology and behavioural science at every stage, to ensure their message has the desired impact on its target audience. This target audience might be the whole of the UK, a specific region such as the Midlands or Wales, or a specific demographic such as middle-aged tax payers. Understanding who your target audience is, what sways their opinion or triggers them to act, and how best to reach them are critical elements of a successful campaign.

In answering these questions there is no one-size-fits-all formula. There are several ways to successfully deliver a message, including different types of messengers and mediums, and the effectiveness of each depends on the nature of the campaign and the target audience. For example, celebrity endorsements on social media may work well for awareness raising campaigns, as they reach a large number of people quickly. Whereas expert endorsements on traditional media sources may be more effective at reaching people for campaigns for policy change, as they are more trusted sources of information. Tailoring a campaign to the goal, subject and audience matters.

However, there are common tools that many successful campaigns use, underpinning their advocacy success. In the next chapter we will take a closer look at how these common tools have been deployed, and how some real-world campaigns have used messages, messengers, and mediums to achieve their campaign goals.

Chapter 2:  
What makes an  
effective campaign?

## Chapter 2:

# What makes an effective campaign?

In this chapter, we first present the results of profiling 25 campaigns, which allowed us to identify '8 Key Tools' used by successful campaigns. We then analyse these tools in the context of our public opinion research findings and insights from interviews with campaign experts to present a more nuanced understanding of which tools campaigns should use and how to best use them.

## 8 Key Tools .....

Our in-depth analysis of 25 campaigns shows that there is no one-size-fits-all formula for creating a successful campaign. However, there are tools used through many of the campaigns, which help to underpin their success.

The 8 key tools deployed by major campaigns are to:



1. **Craft a succinct and clear message.** With the public spending little time tuned in to current affairs, it is important to have a simple message that cuts through.



2. **Demonstrate large public support.** Through protests or petitions, this has shown to be incredibly effective in persuading politicians that an issue will impact them at the ballot box.



3. **Engage through social media.** The age of social media has meant that every campaign now needs a presence online. It will not necessarily change opinion itself - and it can be over-relied on - but a campaign can no longer realistically eschew social media.



4. **Provide an online toolkit.** Online toolkits allow users to generate their own relevant content for a campaign. An online toolkit can increase user engagement and allow content to be shared organically by supporters.



5. **Evoke emotion.** Emotional campaigns have been some of the most successful - sharing personal stories and case studies allows the public to empathise with an issue on a personal level.



6. **Create coalitions.** Where there are campaigns with multiple groups affected by the same issue, working together can help amplify issues and share resources.



7. **Enlist high profile people and organisations.** This has been effective for certain campaigns, helping to spread their message to large social networks and different follower bases or media outlets.



8. **Secure extensive media engagement.** It remains vital for any campaign to engage with consumer media both to influence the public, and decision-makers who read and watch traditional media. Newspaper circulations may be dropping, but news circulation more broadly is thriving online and on social media.

## Analysis of the 8 Key Tools .....

In this section we will explore each of the 8 key tools in greater depth using evidence from the expert interviews and public opinion research.



# 1. Craft a succinct and clear message.

**With the public spending little time tuned in to current affairs, it is important to have a simple message that cuts through.**

We know from the literature review that there are many behavioural science insights to consider when crafting an effective message, including loss-aversion, temporal influence, clear statistics and ensuring memorability.

**Example:** Vote Leave's message

The Vote Leave campaign used a clear and memorable message: "We send the EU £350 million a week. Let's fund our NHS instead."<sup>54</sup> This message was branded on a red bus driven around the country, delivered to homes through leaflets, and published across many media sources. The simplicity and repetition of the message allowed it to cut-through and reach much of the public. In interviews with the R&D community, participants highlighted this campaign and the subsequent 'Get Brexit Done' message as particularly powerful. Interviewees cited it as an example of when clear emotional messaging can be more effective than a more careful, caveated, logical tone.

People value honesty in campaign messages, as was clear from our focus groups with the public. Individuals are aware that change may require them to make a personal sacrifice and want to be told the truth about what those sacrifices might be in advance. They want to understand why certain changes are needed; they want to have a say (and make suggestions) about what those changes should be; and they also want fair warning to prepare. This suggests that in the long-term, people will be more likely to support a campaign that has published honest messages that 'level with them' from the outset.

Our polling and focus groups also confirmed the need for campaigns to have a clear message that emphasises the direct impact of their campaign on the target audience. One result borne out of the focus groups was that there is a hierarchy of support among the public. Issues that impact people directly are at the top (i.e. cancer), followed by issues that people care about generally (i.e. the

<sup>54</sup> Payne, A. (2018). Boris Johnson says his £350 million a week Brexit claim was an 'underestimate', Business Insider. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessinsider.com/boris-johnson-says-his-350-million-a-week-brexit-claim-was-an-underestimate-2018-12?US&R=T>

environment) and, finally, issues that people feel define the kind of person they are and the values that they hold (i.e. wearing a poppy and giving to charity). If a campaign can show how it directly impacts its target audience, it will likely receive more support.

This finding was confirmed in expert interviews, where senior campaign managers described the importance of helping the audience understand how an issue is directly relevant to them.

*“It needed to be very clear that something relatively dry like tax was actually really important. It was about making it clear it would hit people in their pocket.”*

- Howard Cox, Founder, FairFuelUK

Clarity and tangibility are especially important if a campaign is focused on abstract ideas or big concepts. In our focus groups in Derby, people found it difficult to imagine a campaign to colonise Mars – it was too abstract and seemed to have little real impact on their own lives. But when discussing climate change, people were more engaged as they felt the issue was more tangible and might result in changes that would directly impact them.

Findings from the literature review, and interviews with the R&D community, also emphasised the need to consider the context in which your message exists. For example, campaigns about healthcare that are running during the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to be received more positively than they would have been previously. The same is true for the reverse: campaigns unrelated to healthcare or science may be received less favourably or even seen as tone deaf, given the context.



## 2. Demonstrate large public support

**Through protests or petitions, this has shown to be incredibly effective in persuading politicians that an issue will impact them at the ballot box.**

Our public opinion research suggests that demonstrating public support is an effective way to raise levels of awareness. However, the type of demonstration may in some cases undermine levels of support for the campaign.

**Example:** Extinction Rebellion utilising disruption

The Extinction Rebellion campaign uses protests as a central part of their message delivery. In 2019, the campaign rallied demonstrators in Parliament Square, spent 11 days blocking Oxford Street in Central London<sup>55</sup>, and organised a synchronised international protest in more than 60 cities<sup>56</sup>. The campaign uses arrest as a tactic to attract media attention and spread its message.

It was clear from both the polling and focus groups that people do not like direct-action campaign tactics used by Extinction Rebellion, finding them disruptive and selfish. However, they agree they are effective in raising awareness.

The poll findings show that 57% of participants had heard of Extinction Rebellion – the next most recognised campaign tested had 36% overall recognition, with most others barely hitting 10%. However, only 23% of the poll participants stated that they supported the campaign, making it the most contentious of the campaigns we tested. These findings were reflected in the focus groups, where there was very little support for the campaign, even if people agreed with their objectives.

*“By a lot of people, they are seen as crackpots – rich crackpots.”*

*- Retired male, 60s, Derby*

55 Wills, E., & Tobin, O. (2019). Extinction Rebellion activists gather in Hyde Park to Mark End of Disruptive Protests with ‘Closing Ceremony’, Evening Standard. Retrieved from: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/extinction-rebellion-protesters-gather-in-london-to-mark-end-of-demonstrations-with-closing-ceremony-a4126796.html>

56 Ibbetson, R. (2019). Extinction Rebellion Protests go Global, Mail Online. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7545693/Extinction-Rebellion-protests-global-60-cities-face-brought-standstill.html>

*"I just think they're totally annoying and I don't want to pay any attention to them,"*

- Male, 40s, Derby

Other forms of demonstration are considered less controversial, such as petitions, peaceful rallies or big awareness-raising events. Some focus group participants in Derby stated that they prefer positive demonstrations to disruptive ones, such as concerts and televised celebrity-run events that bring people together.

**Example:** Rainbow Laces' positive approach to demonstrations

Rainbow Laces, a campaign tackling homophobia in sport, represents a more positive approach to demonstrating public support. The campaign sent out over 100,000 pairs of rainbow coloured laces to footballers across the UK, who wore the laces during matches to support the campaign<sup>57</sup>. Additionally, 19 Premier League clubs rebranded their logos in solidarity, and other athletes have joined the movement by adding rainbow colours to their uniforms. As a result of these demonstrations, the number of people who believe it is important to challenge anti-LGBT language and abuse at live sporting events rose from 58% in 2018 to 65% in 2019.<sup>58</sup>

During our interviews with advocates across the R&D community, we heard about the power of testimony from specific groups, particularly those affected by the campaign's core issue. An example is the MS Society's campaign for the legalisation of medical cannabis, which used demonstrations to highlight MS sufferers' overwhelming support for the campaign. This show of support from the community in turn helped to sway the public, and politicians, some of whom joined a protest outside of Parliament.<sup>59</sup>

57 Holmes, J. (2019). Rainbow Laces 2019 launches with Stonewall Sport Champions Announcement, Sky Sports. Retrieved from: <https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11095/11866515/rainbow-laces-2019-launches-with-stonewall-sport-champions-announcement>

58 Stonewall (2019). Majority of Brits Want to Play their Part to Challenge Anti-LGBT Abuse in Sport. Retrieved from: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/majority-brits-want-play-their-part-challenge-anti-lgbt-abuse-sport>

59 Cowburn, A. (2017). MPs Join Medical Marijuana Protest Outside Parliament, with Activists Smoking Joints and Demanding Legislation, Independent. Retrieved from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/mps-join-activists-at-cannabis-tea-party-outside-parliament-medicine-a7992996.html>



### 3. Engage through social media

**The age of social media has meant that every campaign now needs a presence online. It will not necessarily change opinion – and it can often be over-relied on – but a campaign can no longer eschew social media**

The polling and focus group data confirm the importance of using social media to reach specific audiences, with 63% of young people reporting they get their news via this medium.

**Example:** ONE campaign trending on Twitter

A campaign that engages well with social media is the ONE campaign to get the UK to commit to spending 0.7% of GNI on international aid. This campaign managed to get their hashtag #TurnUpSaveLives to trend on Twitter twice on the day of the vote in Parliament.<sup>60</sup> The public pressure placed on Parliamentarians likely influenced their decision to ultimately put the 0.7% commitment into law.

*“We spent a lot of time on building an online community. There was lots of noise during the referendum – lots of trolls too – and we wanted to nurture a proper community where people could debate and discuss. We had thousands of people regularly discussing, debating and sharing content. It’s so important.”*

- Mike Galsworthy, Programme Director, Scientists for EU

However, both the polling and focus groups found that people were unlikely to change their mind on an issue based on their friends signing a petition on social media. This may be the case for several reasons. Firstly, many of the participants, especially in the focus groups, stated that they did not trust information from social media sites. Secondly, this may suggest that although people trust those closest to them, they don’t always believe them to be correct. Thirdly, it may suggest that people are simply unhappy to admit they are swayed by the views of others, or don’t in fact realise they have been swayed.

Social media platforms reach different demographics, so it is

60 Baker, T. (2015). 11 Lessons from #TurnUpSaveLives, Bond. Retrieved from: <https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2015/03/11-lessons-turnupsavelives>

important to engage strategically to reach your target audience. During the EU referendum, the Vote Leave campaign put a heavier emphasis on engaging via Facebook as opposed to Twitter, whereas the Stronger In campaign did the reverse. Facebook turned out to be more effective at reaching the target audience (particularly less politically engaged members of the public who hadn't made up their mind); in the six months before the referendum, the Leave.EU page resulted in over 11 million interactions on Facebook, compared to "remain" pages' 3.3 million.<sup>61</sup>

This finding was reiterated in an interview with a senior Conservative campaigner discussing General Election campaigns. They emphasised that the different demographic identities of social media platforms meant that the data from each could only provide insights into a very narrow segment of a campaign's target audience.

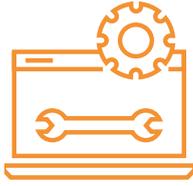
*"There are clearly drawbacks though. Look at how much we lost the battle online in the General Election in 2017. If you'd looked at Twitter only, Corbyn was going to win a landslide. It's important not to get too bogged down on it - the country is very different to social media."*

- Senior Conservative Campaigner, General Election 2019

Speaking to advocates across the R&D community, we heard a number of fears about campaigns being caught in a social media "bubble". Opinions on social media platforms varied by sector, with charity representatives tending to favour Twitter, while industry and academic representatives feared that Twitter-based campaigns could get lost in a 'political echo chamber' or give a warped view of public opinion; they instead favoured Facebook as a more effective medium to reach politically less-engaged members of the public.

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61 Herrman, J. (2016). 'Brexit' Talk on Social Media Favoured the 'Leave' Side, The Telegraph. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/25/business/brexit-talk-on-social-media-heavily-favored-the-leave-side.html>



## 4. Provide an online toolkit

**Online toolkits allow users to generate their own relevant content for a campaign. An online toolkit can increase user engagement and allow content to be shared organically by supporters.**

Many of the successful campaigns we analysed used online toolkits to allow supporters to generate their own content and engage with the campaign. This user-generated content is useful in gaining new supporters because people are more likely to be sympathetic to a cause when they see someone they know and trust supporting it.

*“Online toolkits are vital. It’s important to keep it tight so message discipline doesn’t go out the window, but giving activists and users the chance to share stuff quickly and create things themselves is vital. It helps make it all that more organic.”*

– Senior Conservative Campaigner, General Election 2019

**Example:** This Girl Can’s online toolkit

The ‘This Girl Can’ campaign by Sport England, which seeks to increase physical activity among all women across the UK, has been very successful at building an online presence. This campaign offers free online resources, such as photos, poster templates, logos and brand guidelines which supporters use to create and share content with their social networks.<sup>62</sup> Ultimately, this creates and spreads free authentic advertising for the campaign.

Our R&D community interviews indicated that toolkits can both encourage support for a movement and promote behavioural change by making people feel part of the campaign. Interviewees cited several effective examples, including the Millennium Bug Campaign’s toolkit, which provided businesses with information on how to make sure their equipment was ready for the year 2000.

The public opinion research confirmed the importance of giving the public opportunities to carry the campaign message themselves. This came through clearly in the focus groups, where people reported

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<sup>62</sup> This Girl Can. Retrieved from: <https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/>

judging the trustworthiness of information by the authenticity of the person delivering it and by how much they have their best interests at heart.

*“One of the things that needs to be remembered is that celebrities and high-profile people can be effective, but you have to have real people involved too. People don't want to be talked at”*

- Senior Conservative Campaigner, General Election 2019

Focus group participants said they trusted 'people like them' – those in professions such as teaching, nursing, engineering – almost as much friends and family, and more than experts and politicians. For example, when asked to imagine a campaign to reintroduce wolves into the wild, focus group participants said that a group of mothers who expressed concerns that wolves might attack small children should be trusted over businesspeople and even over a trusted expert like David Attenborough. Therefore, campaigns that get everyday people to spread the message organically may have better success than those relying on top-down message delivery.

*“If it was between Richard Branson and Gary the heating engineer, I'd trust Gary down the road.”*

- Male, 20s, Derby



## 5. Evoke emotion

**Emotional campaigns have been some of the most successful – sharing personal stories and case studies allows the public to empathise with an issue on a personal level.**

**Example:** Tackling the Carers' Crisis use of emotion

The effective use of emotion is demonstrated in the 'Tackling the Carers' Crisis' campaign by Macmillan Cancer Support, which pushed for additional support for carers for people with cancer. The campaign interviewed over 400 carers and shared their stories with the public, garnering public sympathy for the cause.<sup>63</sup> They openly discussed the financial, mental health and social issues that carers face due to the lack of adequate support. Macmillan also used emotion as a tool in research papers, one of which was entitled "Do You Care?"<sup>64</sup>. This tactic had a major impact, with over 15,000 people signing their petition and, ultimately, getting legislation passed (although they believe more needs to be done).

*"Our work around cancer is naturally emotive in many cases – with families and friends all impacted by cancer. Many politicians are personally motivated by wanting to help, and that comes on an emotional level. Where there is that emotive connection, it can naturally raise importance."*

– Emma Greenwood, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Cancer Research UK

Our interviewees from the R&D community also stressed the value of emotions in campaigning, and referenced the "Do You Care?" campaign as a powerful example of such an approach. Interestingly, interviewees tended to cite examples of negative emotions elicited by campaigns as the most memorable, impactful campaign tools. We also found that representatives of the charitable sector were more likely to favour the use of emotion as an effective campaign tool than those from industrial and academic backgrounds.

63 Macmillan Cancer Support, Tackle the Carers' Crisis. Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/carers>

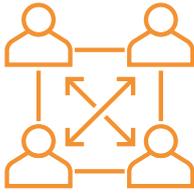
64 Macmillan Cancer Support (2014). Do You Care? Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/documents/getinvolved/campaigns/carers/doyou-carehelpinghealthprofessionalstoidentifyandsupportcarers.pdf>

The public opinion research confirmed that evoking emotion is a good tool for swaying public opinion; however, positive and negative messages have different impacts on levels of public support and awareness. Focus group participants disapproved of negative campaigns and instead preferred those using positive messages and humour.

*“Humour appeals to people because it’s a relief amongst all the serious and negative stories that make up the news constantly”*

- Male, 40s, Watford

However, while positive campaigns lead to higher levels of support, negative campaigns lead to higher levels of awareness. The polling findings confirm that positive campaigns attract high levels of support, such as Rainbow Laces (47% support) and WASPI Women (51% support), particularly compared to Extinction Rebellion (23% support). Yet only 14% of respondents had heard of Rainbow Laces, as opposed to 57% who had heard of Extinction Rebellion. This highlights a major challenge for campaigners: even though people disagree with the tactics of negative campaigns, they seem to be the most successful at raising awareness.



## 6. Create coalitions

**Where there are campaigns with multiple groups affected by the same issue, working together can help amplify issues and share resources.**

Collaboration can expand the campaign's reach and audience, unlock additional resources, provide insights into the successes and failures of similar campaigns, and give the campaign's message more credibility.

*"Building good strong coalitions was massively important to us. We needed different people saying different things constantly – whether it was through arranging demonstrations or doing media. The more credible voices the better."*

- Stuart Fegan, National Officer, GMB Union

*"We knew the importance of having other voices in the debate. We couldn't do it ourselves, you have to build other third parties too."*

- Mike Galsworthy, Programme Director, Scientists for EU

**Example:** Out of Sight, Out of Mind's coalition building

A campaign that built a strong coalition was Cancer Research UK's 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' campaign, which aimed to close loopholes regarding tobacco advertising. The campaign worked with other public health campaigners to raise awareness of their research and campaign message. By working in conjunction with other public health campaigns, 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' was able to reach further and mobilised over 1,300 people to write to MPs and local papers about the issue.<sup>65</sup>

While positive about the use of coalitions, R&D community members warned that coalitions must be rigorously focused on their key message, as different voices can muddle a campaign's message. Additionally, the need to get sign off from a range of different groups can end up diluting a campaign's message to the lowest common denominator or inhibit a campaign's ability to be nimble – particularly

<sup>65</sup> Cancer Research UK. Out of Sight, Out of Mind. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/get-involved/campaign-for-us/our-campaigning-successes/out-of-sight-out-of-mind>

if different members of the coalition have different risk appetites. A broader coalition also raises the likelihood of the target audience finding something they dislike about one of the members, potentially putting them off the whole campaign.

Conversely, interviewees also highlighted the power of a diverse coalition which can reach many more people and draw from a broader supporter base. Demonstrating this breadth of support can, in turn, help attract media coverage – for instance, over 100 UK civil society organisations signed a letter to the Prime Minister in August 2019 highlighting shared concerns about a no-deal Brexit, with the number of co-signatories helping to attract substantial media coverage.<sup>66</sup>

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66 Brexit Civil Society Alliance, (2019). Open Letter to the Prime Minister: 100 Organisations Join Forces to Express Concerns About a No-Deal Brexit. Retrieved from: <https://www.brexitcivilsocietyalliance.org/news-indexpage/2019/8/29/open-letter-to-the-prime-minister-85-organisations-join-forces-to-express-concerns-about-a-no-deal-brexit>



## 7. Enlist high profile people & organisations

**This has been effective for certain campaigns, by helping to spread their message to large social networks and follower bases or media outlets.**

Deploying campaign advocates, including experts and celebrities, can be a powerful tool but must be done with great care.

*“We made a point very early on that we would need someone high profile to front the campaign. It made total sense to bring in Quentin Wilson - well known in the world of driving and a broadcast figure - to lead from the front. It helped us to get media coverage, but also to get the public on board.”*

- Howard Cox, Founder, FairFuel UK

### **Example:** Hugh's Fish Fight's celebrity spokesperson

This campaign to change EU rules on fishing discard was led by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, a TV host on Channel 4. He leveraged his celebrity status to reach millions of people across the country and attract other high-profile organisations to join his effort, such as ClientEarth, Greenpeace and Ocean 2012.<sup>67</sup> These powerful supporters ultimately resulted in 900,000 petition signatures, as well as significant pressure on politicians and leading retailers to implement change.<sup>68</sup>

It was clear from the opinion research that profile alone is not enough, and an effective spokesperson, whether an expert or a celebrity, must also be knowledgeable, relevant, impartial and trustworthy.

*“We had some very talented scientists and organisations on board with our campaign. They were very helpful in giving the organisation the credibility it needed. You can't understate the power of those high-profile endorsements.”*

- Mike Galsworthy, Programme Director, Scientists for EU

67 Glanfield, T. (2012). Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall Welcomes “Massive Breakthrough” for Fish Fight, Radio Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.radiotimes.com/news/2012-06-14/hugh-fearnley-whittingstall-welcomes-massive-breakthrough-for-fish-fight/>

68 White, K. (2015). Who Were the Real Winners of Hugh's Fish Fight? The Grocer. Retrieved from: <https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/meat-fish-and-poultry-report-2015/who-were-the-real-winners-of-hughs-fish-fight-/520688.article>

Experts are better trusted than celebrities, businesspeople and politicians; more than half of the poll respondents (55%) agree that experts normally know what is best for the country. Despite this general level of trust, people are inclined to question their motives and impartiality. When asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement, “Experts have their own agenda when they argue what is best for the country”, 69% agree. This was echoed in the focus groups, with participants raising concerns that experts are used to push hidden agendas or present their own opinions as fact.

*“You just never know with experts - all the claims and forecasts they make are wrong half the time, how can any of it be believed?”*

- Female, 40s, Watford

In the poll we tested the impact of the Government’s Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) supporting a campaign, finding that 34% of respondents would be more likely to support the campaign following the CSA’s endorsement. However, this finding was not mirrored in the focus groups, where the CSA’s views were met with distrust; one middle-aged woman in Derby referred to the CSA’s advice as “dodge”. It seems likely that the view that experts have their own agenda is exacerbated by association with Government.

The R&D community, perhaps unsurprisingly, were positive about campaigns deploying experts. Participants were also keen to point out that the way in which experts communicate to the public is crucial for their success and were concerned that the R&D community lacked enough engaging communicators.

An expert who fails to communicate effectively risks alienating the public and could make a campaign look out of touch with the public, or even elitist. We tested this in the poll by using an example of an expert astrophysicist calling those opposed to the hypothetical Mars campaign “stupid”. We found that this would increase opposition to the campaign by 33%. This suggests that experts need to be very wary of appearing condescending when making their case.

With regards to celebrity endorsements, our research shows that they generally have very little impact on public opinion. For example, we tested the impact of Judi Dench speaking about the merits of a hypothetical campaign to explore Mars and it did very little to sway people’s opinions. We also tested whether people are influenced by celebrity endorsements for environmental activist groups, focus group participants responded that celebrities were hypocritical for flying around the world in private jets and then preaching about the need to address climate change.

*“Celebrities just want to make themselves look pious.”*

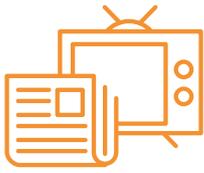
- Male, 40s, Derby

The exceptions to this are if the celebrity is seen to be relevant, knowledgeable and trustworthy. It was under these conditions that the use of celebrities was praised by focus group participants and R&D interviewees. The celebrity most frequently cited during the focus groups as someone who could sway opinion was David Attenborough. He was often described as honest, authentic, well-motivated and, crucially, without a hidden agenda. His widespread appeal may be driven by a perception of being an expert first and a celebrity second or even more so, a trusted avuncular figure first, then an expert and then a celebrity.

*“If people that you respect and admire and have a certain expertise lend their weight to a campaign, it does have an effect.”*

- Male, 60s, Watford

The timing and delivery of celebrity endorsements is also important. Older focus group participants expressed their disapproval of celebrities using platforms such as the BRIT Awards to make endorsements, especially politically charged endorsements. However, this was not a universally held view, younger participants tended to support celebrities making endorsements during large-scale entertainment events. Campaigns must therefore consider who their target audience is and how best to reach them using different platforms.



## 8. Secure extensive media coverage

**It remains vital for any campaign to engage with consumer media both to influence the public, and decision-makers who read and watch traditional media. Newspaper circulations may be dropping but news circulation more broadly is thriving online and on social media.**

Every campaign we analysed engaged with either traditional or online media, or both. It is important to understand the differences in demographics across media outlets in order to reach the target audience.

“At times we’d have dozens of media bids a day. We had wall-to-wall coverage and it was constant. But it helped raise the profile of the issue. We got the backing of national newspapers. I think the importance of that can’t be understated.”

- Howard Cox, Founder, FairFuel UK

### **Example:** PacketInWalkers’ media coverage

38 Degree’s ‘PacketInWalkers’ campaign secured extensive media coverage. This campaign used a combination of traditional and online media to spread its message, although it was particularly effective at engaging with traditional media. The campaign secured extensive coverage in the UK press and featured as BBC News’ most read story of the day, it even reached international news outlets, such as CNN and Time Magazine.<sup>69</sup> The campaign encouraged supporters to post crisp packets back to Walkers to highlight the lack of quality recycling schemes and the environmental consequences of plastic crisp packets.

The use of media was extremely effective, shown by the amount of people who signed the petition and mailed packets back to Walkers. Just two months after the campaign was launched, Walkers announced a new recycling scheme and encouraged consumers to send crisp packets to one of over 1600 drop-off locations across the country.<sup>70</sup>

69 89up, Packaging Campaign Success for 38 Degrees. Retrieved from: <https://www.89up.org/news/packaging-campaign-success-38-degrees>

70 Terracycle, The Crisp Packet Recycling Machine. Retrieved from: <https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades/crisppacket>

Public opinion findings confirm that media engagement is important for spreading awareness, with 66% of people saying they get their news from national television. However, the focus groups revealed widespread distrust across all traditional media sources: print, broadcast, and radio and so campaigners should not expect their messages to be universally accepted.

*“What we get is a censored version. It’s the version to keep the people happy,”*

- Female, 40s, Derby

The public opinion findings also confirm the demographic differences between engagement with different media outlets, with television more commonly cited by older participants and social media by younger participants. This suggests that for campaigns to be successful, they must secure the right media coverage so that the message reaches the target audience. For example, a campaign targeting a more right-wing audience may want to share their message in a right-leaning newspaper, and tailor their message around issues that already matter to their intended audience.

More broadly, it should also be remembered that decision-makers themselves digest traditional media, and outlets with limited audiences (e.g. the Today programme) remain important because they are where key decision-makers, and in particular politicians and civil servants, get their news.



## What have we learned about the common tools for running a successful campaign?

These 8 key tools are by no means exclusive and there are a range of other tactics that campaigns deploy. They are, instead, based on our analysis of successful campaigns and public opinion research, the most common building blocks of successful advocacy campaigns.

Equally, it is rare for a campaign to deploy all these tools at the same time and campaigners will need to decide when and how to deploy a particular method for maximum effect – what a campaign does in the run up to a General Election may be very different from what it does mid-parliament.

Finally, while most successful and high-profile campaigns use some combination of these tools, our campaign profiling shows that the way they wield them varies greatly. In the next section, we further explore that diversity of approaches, and bring together our understanding of different campaigns through a typology of campaign approaches.

# Chapter 3: Common types of campaigns

## Chapter 3

# Common types of campaigns

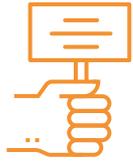
In this chapter we will present our six campaign typologies, created by bringing together the findings from the literature review, opinion research and campaign profiling. For each typology we provide a summary description, two case studies, and an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. While inevitably some may not fit perfectly into these categories, we believe they cover the vast majority of advocacy models deployed by issue-based campaigns.

Table 1 answers six key questions about each typology:

- 1. Who is the face?** Campaigns can adopt a bottom-up grassroots approach and be led by those 'on the ground' - normally the general public - or take a top-down elite approach led by a single or group of organisations with professional support.
- 2. Who is the organiser?** Campaigns can be run by professional campaigners and lobbyists, or by full-time activists, but can also be created in a grassroots manner. A campaign's growth can be managed or they can grow organically.
- 3. What is the medium?** Campaigns can use different platforms to spread their message and host their activities (online/offline). These can include in-person demonstrations and rallies, media coverage or online petitions and activities.
- 4. When is the campaign used?** Campaigns can be organised around specific events (i.e. an election), annual recurring moments (i.e. during a sports season), be ongoing indefinitely, or run intermittently when opportunities arise.
- 5. Who is the target audience?** Campaigns aimed at changing public opinion or raising awareness may choose to target the public, whereas campaigns with a more technical policy goal may choose to target politicians and decision-makers directly.
- 6. How is the ask made?** Some campaigns use more emotive messages whereas others take a more logic-based approach. Some use disruptive tactics and negative messaging, whereas others are more positive. The language and cultural references used can also differ greatly, with some campaigns using informal language and pop culture references, while others are more formal and technical.

Table 1: Summary of Campaign Typologies

	Who is the face?	Who is the organiser?	What is the medium?	When is the campaign used?	Who are the target audience?	How is the ask made?	Examples
<b>The Disrupters</b>	Grassroots	Professional organisers and grassroots activists	Demonstrations, petitions, online/ social media	Intermittent	Public & politicians & corporations	Emotive, Negative, Disruptive, Bold	Extinction Rebellion, Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wallstreet
<b>Clicktivism</b>	Grassroots	Professional organisers or grassroots	Entirely online	Intermittent	Public	Emotive, Pop culture	This Girl Can, Je Suis Charlie, Save Darfur
<b>Feel Good</b>	Elite or Grassroots	Professional organisers or grassroots	Mostly online & social media, grassroots & celebs	One-off or annual recurring	Public	Emotive, Positive	Rainbow Laces, Ice Bucket Challenge
<b>Traditional Lobbying</b>	Elite	Professional lobbyists	Behind the scenes campaign	Ongoing	Politicians	Logic-based	Heathrow, Financial Industry Lobbying
<b>The Strength of Our Argument</b>	Elite, think tanks, experts, scientists	Professional campaigners and volunteer activists	Mainstream media, social media	Run up to specific events i.e. referendums or during crisis	Public	Logic-based	Stronger In, No to Independence, COVID response
<b>This Affects You</b>	Grassroots	Professional campaigners and organisers, grassroots activists	Mobilisation: Marches, social media, mainstream media coverage	Ongoing, with increased activity in the run up to specific events e.g. elections	Politicians	Emotive & logic-based	School cuts, WASPI



# The Disrupters

*The Disrupters* are grassroots movements that use publicity-generating shock tactics, and don't particularly care about 'being liked'. They use disruption – ranging from large demonstrations, to road blockades and pickets – to efficiently garner media attention. Their messages are hard-hitting, emotive and often negative: campaigns like this are more likely to have a clear 'enemy'. Their core goal is to raise awareness of their cause – usually a perceived injustice – among the public, politicians, and corporations. Rarely is the disruption itself what leads to long term policy change, instead it is the increased awareness that leads to pressure for change.

Examples stretch from the Suffragette movement in the early 1900s to modern campaigns such as Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter. Disrupter campaigns are also used in movements protesting political regimes, such as those led by Pussy Riot in Russia and the 2019 Hong Kong protests.

Public opinion research shows these tactics are effective at raising awareness, but also tend to be widely disliked. In our polling, 57% of people had heard of the Disrupter campaign Extinction Rebellion, an exceptionally high level of recognition compared to the other campaigns tested. While 59% of people agreed that Extinction Rebellion had been successful in raising awareness of climate change, only 23% of participants supported it and 44% opposed it. In comparison, 47% of participants said they supported Rainbow Laces, a campaign with more positive and peaceful tactics, with just 14% opposed to it. These results were also reflected in the focus groups, where most participants had heard of Extinction Rebellion but there was very little support for the campaign and its tactics.

## Case study 1: Extinction Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion was founded in 2018 with the mission: 1. To pressure the government to declare a climate and ecological emergency; 2. To halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse emissions to net zero by 2025; and 3. To create a citizen's assembly for climate justice.<sup>71</sup>

Extinction Rebellion uses direct-action method of campaigning in the form of disruptive protests. The first protest was a 1,000 person

<sup>71</sup> Extinction Rebellion, *Our Demands*. Retrieved from: <https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/demands/>

“declaration of rebellion” in Parliament Square, which has been followed by dozens of organised protests blockading government departments and transport hubs.<sup>72</sup> The campaign uses arrest as a tactic to increase awareness and media attention; over 1,600 arrests were made in London alone during a two-week ‘international rebellion’ period in 2019.<sup>73</sup>

Extinction Rebellion’s tactics have been extremely successful at raising awareness. During the two-week protests in 2019, the campaign was mentioned 70,000 times in online media, and the campaign’s main twitter account has over 340,000 followers.

Despite its success in raising awareness, Extinction Rebellion has been criticised by some for its tactics. For example, the Metropolitan police complained about the £24 million cost for additional policing,<sup>74</sup> and attempted to impose tighter restrictions on demonstrations.<sup>75</sup> The campaign has also been criticised by the right-wing press, including the Daily Mail<sup>76</sup> and the Telegraph.<sup>77</sup> The nature of these criticisms varied widely, with Extinction Rebellion activists being labelled everything from “self-indulgent”, “a global elite sham” to “fanatics” and “extremists”.

## Case study 2: Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter is an activist movement against violence and systemic racism towards black people. The movement regularly protests against police killings of black people, racial profiling, police brutality and racial inequality in the United States criminal justice system.

The campaign began in 2013 as an online movement with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter following George Zimmerman’s acquittal for the shooting and killing of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teenager.<sup>78</sup> Since then, the campaign has grown into a decentralised movement, with 16 chapters across the United States. Thousands

72 Taylor, M. (2018). 15 Environmental Protestors Arrested at Civil Disobedience Campaign in London, Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/31/15-environmental-protesters-arrested-at-civil-disobedience-campaign-in-london#:~:text=More%20than%201%2C000%20people%20from,to%20the%20unfolding%20climate%20emergency.&text=And%20earlier%20this%20month%20the,left%20to%20prevent%20climate%20catastrophe>.

73 Climate Change News (2019). After 1,600 arrests, Extinction Rebellion fights for right to protest in UK. Retrieved from: <https://www.climatechange-news.com/2019/10/16/1600-arrests-extinction-rebellion-fights-right-protest-uk/>

74 Financial Times, (2019). London-wide police ban on Extinction Rebellion protest ruled illegal. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/bee658fc-0087-11ea-b7bc-f3fa4e7dd47>

75 Guardian, (2019). Police seek tougher powers against Extinction Rebellion. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/19/police-seek-tougher-powers-against-extinction-rebellion>

76 Mail on Sunday, (2019). Why do we listen to a bunch of anarchists who can't even work a fire hose? <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-7541965/DOUGLAS-MURRAY-listen-bunch-anarchists-work-fire-hose.html>

77 The Telegraph, (2019). Extinction Rebellion exposes Left-wing activism as a global elite sham. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/10/07/extinction-rebellion-exposes-left-wing-activism-global-elite/>

78 Black Lives Matter, About. Retrieved from: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>

of demonstrations have been organised by groups and individuals using the Black Lives Matter banner. Some are co-ordinated by the official Black Lives Matter organisation itself, while others have just adopted the name. These demonstrations have ranged from peaceful sit-ins to mass demonstrations, while a small minority of protestors have engaged in more violent protests. These demonstrations have attracted many supporters, counter-protestors, and extensive media attention. In May 2020 the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minnesota, led to Black Lives Matter protests attracting many thousands of supporters in cities around the world.

Like other direct-action campaigns, Black Lives Matter faces opposition from some sections of the public, exemplified by the rise of counter-slogans such as “all lives matter”. However, it has been extremely successful at raising awareness and from 2013-2018, the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag was tweeted nearly 30 million times.<sup>79</sup> Further, in 2014 the American Dialect Society chose #BlackLivesMatter as their word of the year,<sup>80</sup> and Yes! Magazine included #BlackLivesMatter as one of the twelve hashtags that has changed the world.<sup>81</sup> That high level of engagement has continued in subsequent protests – for instance during the May 2020 protests on one day alone #BlackLivesMatter was shared more than 8 million times on Twitter.<sup>82</sup>

## Strengths of Disruptor campaigns .....

- Extremely effective at raising awareness of an issue due to their bold demonstration tactics which produce engaging media stories.
- The high volume of media coverage generated can create a space for more constructive discourse, and the ‘extreme’ nature of the campaign’s initial demands may make less dramatic steps appear more palatable.
- Engages supporters on issues they feel passionate about, which helps build a loyal and lasting support base to sustain awareness-building activities.

79 Anderson, M., Toor, S., Rainie, L., & Smith, A. (2018). Activism in the Social Media Age, Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/07/11/an-analysis-of-blacklivesmatter-and-other-twitter-hashtags-related-to-political-or-social-issues/>

80 Steinmetz, K. (2015). #blacklivesmatter Is the American Dialect Society’s 2014 Word of the Year, Time. Retrieved from: <https://time.com/3662593/2014-word-of-year-blacklivesmatter/>

81 Weedston, L. (2014). 12 Hashtags that Changed the World in 2014, Yes! Magazine. Retrieved from: <https://www.yesmagazine.org/democracy/2014/12/20/12-hashtags-that-changed-the-world-in-2014/>

82 Washington Post, (2020). Tinder, TikTok and more: Online activists are finding creative new ways to say Black Lives Matter. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/06/12/tiktok-tinder-twitter-bis-black-lives-matter/>

## Weaknesses of Disruptor campaigns .....

- Very polarising; the disruptive nature of these campaigns tends to attract very low levels of public support and can alienate people - sometimes, inciting the rise of counter-movements.
- As these campaigns work to 'shock' rather than to persuade, their tactics can at times push people further away from the topic the campaign is ultimately trying to draw attention to.
- Occasionally they are 'hijacked' by extreme elements who engage in violence and destruction of property which strongly alienates some audiences.

## When are Disruptor campaigns most effective? .....

This type of campaign is most effective for large-scale activist movements fighting a major injustice, such as those linked to civil rights, women's rights, or climate change. It can be useful for those seeking policy change - for example, regulations addressing climate change - or societal shifts - such as systemic racism or homophobia.



## Clicktivism

*Clicktivism* campaigns are almost entirely online, grassroots campaigns. The target audience is the public and the campaign is usually centred around changing public opinion or raising awareness. These campaigns arise organically, often to showcase public support in response to a significant event (e.g. the 2015 Charlie Hebdo terror attack), to raise awareness of a perceived injustice (e.g. the 2004 humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan), or to galvanise public opinion against an individual case of injustice (e.g. an asylum claim that the campaigners think has been unfairly rejected).

These campaigns use emotive messages that can be positive or negative, often borrowing motifs from popular culture and using humour. Memes and hashtags may be used as quick and easy ways for people to engage. Using simple and emotive messaging allows *Clicktivism* campaigns to spread quickly across social media platforms and to demonstrate mass support, while requiring very little engagement from supporters beyond clicking a button. In recent years, organisations such as 38 Degrees and Change.org that specialise in this form of internet-based, mass mobilisation campaigning have emerged.

Our opinion research suggests that *Clicktivism* campaigns are more likely to reach a younger demographic, as 63% of 18-24-year-olds reported using social media for their news, compared to only 11% of the over 65-year-olds. Further, the focus group findings suggest that the positive and humorous messages often used in *Clicktivism* campaigns may be better at catching people's attention versus more serious or negative messages.

*“Humour appeals to people because it's a relief amongst all the serious and negative stories that make up the news constantly”*

- Male, 40s, Watford

The focus groups also revealed that ‘everyday people’ can be very effective campaign messengers because they are trusted more than experts, celebrities, and politicians. However, it seems that this trust depends on the platform the messengers use and may not apply to social media. In both the poll and focus groups, people were unlikely to change their mind on an issue based on their friends signing a petition on social media. Therefore, although *Clicktivism* messengers are trusted, the social media platform it uses is not, which hinders

the campaign's effectiveness. *Clicktivism* campaigns may only be successful at reinforcing support among people who already agree with the campaign aims, rather than winning new support or converting non-supporters.

### Case study 1: This Girl Can

This Girl Can is an almost entirely online campaign by Sport England that launched in 2015 in response to the gender gap in sports participation, with 1.75 million fewer 14 to 40-year-old women participating in sport than men.<sup>83</sup> The campaign is focused on dismantling the 'fear of being judged', which was cited as the most common reason for avoiding sport.

To encourage participation, the campaign released adverts depicting non-celebrity women mid-exercise alongside slogans such as "sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox."<sup>84</sup> The slogans take negative comments about exercising and turn them into something positive; the images reflect real life and show "what activity really looks like in all its sweaty, red-faced, jiggy glory;"<sup>85</sup> and the messenger, everyday women, helped the audience see themselves in the campaign.

The campaign has successfully marshalled online engagement, with an online toolkit allowing supporters to create and share their own 'This Girl Can' posters. Since it launched, there have been over 660,000 tweets using the #ThisGirlCan hashtag and over 37 million campaign views.<sup>86</sup>

### Case study 2: Je Suis Charlie

The Je Suis Charlie (I Am Charlie) campaign began in 2015 in response to the terror attack in Paris, in which ten employees of the Charlie Hebdo magazine were killed. The slogan was originally created by French art director Joachim Roncin and spread organically from his original post. In a show of solidarity, people used the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie on social media to show their support for press freedom. It quickly became one of the most popular hashtags in Twitter history<sup>87</sup> with 6 million posts on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook in the week that followed.<sup>88</sup> Celebrities

83 Sport England, (2020). This Girl Can Campaign Summary. Retrieved from: [https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-01/Campaign-Summary.pdf?YU\\_jmNiqPxjL8lJCOEqvXjL\\_GOFpx](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-01/Campaign-Summary.pdf?YU_jmNiqPxjL8lJCOEqvXjL_GOFpx)

84 Kirkova, D. (2015). Sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox: Sport England launch campaign to get women active regardless of age, shape and ability, Mail Online. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2903926/Sweating-like-pig-feeling-like-fox-Sport-England-launch-campaign-women-active-regardless-age-shape-ability.html>

85 This Girl Can, About Us. Retrieved from: <https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/about-us/>

86 The-Dots (2020) This Girl Can. Retrieved from: <https://the-dots.com/projects/this-girl-can-case-study-142741>

87 CNN Business (2015). #JeSuisCharlie becomes one of most popular hashtags in Twitter's history. Retrieved from: <https://money.cnn.com/2015/01/09/technology/social/jesuischarlie-hashtag-twitter/index.html>

88 Devichand, M. (2016). How the world was changes by the slogan 'Je Suis Charlie', BBC Trending. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

joined the campaign online, wore pins, held “Je Suis Charlie” signs, or championed the campaign during the 2015 Golden Globes awards.<sup>89</sup>

There was some pushback against the campaign, including the rise of the ‘I Am Not Charlie’ movement which condemned the attacks, but also the offensive cartoons that Charlie Hebdo had published.

### Strengths of Clicktivism campaigns .....

- Very low, if any, running costs. By relying on supporters sharing the message organically and making the campaign go viral, they don't need paid advertisements or messengers.
- Can garner swells of public support in a very short period of time because the message is so easy to spread, requiring a simple click.
- Many high-profile people feel able to join in and show support because these campaigns often centre on non-controversial issues, such as anti-terror. This in turn helps to spread the message to new audiences.
- Particularly effective at drawing attention to individual cases of injustice: for example, that of asylum-seekers. One prominent example showcasing the power of *Clicktivism* was the case of a 17-year-old student asylum-seeker in Bristol who had escaped violence in Albania and came to the UK at age 13. He was originally denied asylum, however after an online petition protesting the decision received over 90,000 signatures his appeal was accepted.<sup>90</sup>

### Weaknesses of Clicktivism campaigns .....

- Use social media as their only platform, which is not a highly trusted news source. Only 39% of people trust news from social media.<sup>91</sup> The levels of public distrust varies by social media platform; the three least trusted platforms are Facebook (59% distrust), Twitter (48% distrust) and Instagram (42% distrust).<sup>92</sup>

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blogs-trending-35108339

89 BBC News (2015). Golden Globes: Celebrities show Charlie Hebdo support. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/entertainment-arts-30773290/golden-globes-celebrities-show-charlie-hebdo-support>

90 BBC News (2019). 'Outstanding' student Stiven Bregu saved from deportation. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-49168059>

91 Edelman, R. (2020). 20 Years of Trust. Retrieved from: <https://www.edelman.com/20yearsoftrust/>

92 Jurkowitz, M., & Mitchell, A. (2020). An oasis of bipartisanship: Republicans and Democrats distrust social media sites for political and election news, Pew Research Centre. Retrieved from: <https://www.journalism.org/2020/01/29/an-oasis-of-bipartisanship-republicans-and-democrats-distrust-social-media-sites-for-political-and-election-news/>

- Since anyone can participate in *Clicktivism* campaigns online, they risk being hijacked. For example, the New York Police Department tried to boost its public image by starting a #myNYPD campaign, inviting members of the public to post pictures of themselves with the police. Instead, the campaign was hijacked by Twitter users who posted pictures of police brutality – by the next day it was one of Twitter’s top trending hashtags.<sup>93</sup>
- According to our opinion research, they are not very effective at swaying people’s views.
- These campaigns rarely demonstrate or engender depth of support. The fact that people only have to click a button or to share an image does not lend it itself to deep engagement. For example, over three years more than a million people liked the ‘Save Darfur’ Facebook page, but only 3,000 donated, raising \$90,000. In comparison, the broader ‘offline’ Darfur campaign raised over \$1 million in 2008.<sup>94</sup>

### When are Clicktivism Campaigns most effective? .....

*Clicktivism* campaigns are most effective at spreading a message quickly or demonstrating wide public support on an issue. These campaigns are often short-lived and may not be suitable for issues where lasting change or sustained supporter engagement is needed.

Although *Clicktivism* campaigns are not particularly useful for large scale policy change, they can be extremely effective at quickly creating change in an individual case. For example, an overwhelming show of support for an individual asylum-seeker has shown to have an impact on Home Office decisions. Additionally, there are many examples of online petitions successfully pressuring companies to fire employees based on an individual’s misconduct (i.e. racist commentary on Twitter).<sup>95</sup>

93 BBC News (2014). NYPD Twitter campaign ‘backfires’ after hashtag hijacked. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-27126041>

94 Patel, K. (2014). The Shallowness of ‘Clicktivism’. Retrieved from: <https://ewn.co.za/2014/07/14/OPINION-Khadija-Patel-The-shallowness-of-clicktivism>

95 BBC News (2020). Amy Cooper: Woman sacked after calling police on black man. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52759502>



*Feel Good* campaigns are movements that have a strong online element but, unlike *Clicktivism*, also involve offline activity. These campaigns can either be elite-led or grassroots. They encourage mass mobilisation and participation, often with prominent celebrity participants, and may run annually linked to a particular event, day, or month.

*Feel Good* campaigns use positive and emotive messaging, and often require supporters to carry out some specific action (i.e. a run or wearing a ribbon) to demonstrate their support. They are commonly used by charities for fundraising – often setting people a challenge linked to a donation, and then encouraging them to call on a group of others to do the same. Other than driving donations, the purpose of these campaigns is normally awareness raising or behaviour change, rather than policy change.

*Feel Good* campaigns can be one-off, such as the grassroots ‘5k run for the NHS’ campaign in which people were nominated to donate £5, run 5 kilometres, and then nominate 5 more people via social media. This campaign arose specifically to support the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, *Feel Good* campaigns may also be recurring, such as Comic Relief/Red Nose Day which takes place in March biennially.

The public opinion research shows that *Feel Good* campaigns have the opposite impact to *The Disrupters* - they are widely liked, but they are not as powerful at raising awareness. For example, Rainbow Laces, a *Feel Good* campaign that we tested, was supported by 47% of poll participants and opposed by only 14%. In comparison, Extinction Rebellion, a *Disrupter* campaign that we tested, had 23% support and 44% opposition. However, only 14% of participants had ever heard of Rainbow Laces, whereas 57% had heard of Extinction Rebellion.

The focus group findings suggest that people trust the ‘everyday’ messengers of *Feel Good* campaigns more than experts, celebrities, or politicians. However, these campaigns often seek celebrity involvement, and the public opinion research shows that choosing the right celebrity who is well liked and linked to the cause can be highly effective. If the celebrity is seen to be relevant, knowledgeable, and trustworthy then their endorsement may sway people’s opinions.

## Case study 1: Ice Bucket Challenge

The Ice Bucket Challenge was a grassroots campaign to raise awareness of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as motor neuron disease. The challenge required nominated participants to dump a bucket of ice water over their heads or donate money to ALS research, and then nominate others to do the same.

The Challenge went viral in 2014, with over 17 million videos related to the Ice Bucket Challenge posted on Facebook and \$220 million raised for the ALS Association.<sup>96</sup> Hundreds of high profile people and organisations got involved, including Amazon, which hosted a “donate now” button on their website, and celebrities such as Justin Bieber, Oprah Winfrey, and even former U.S. President George W. Bush.

In the two months following the introduction of the Challenge, it received 4.5 million Twitter mentions and the ALS Association account more than doubled its followers.<sup>97</sup> While the campaign drew widespread public support, a minority criticised the movement as “slacktivism,” claiming that the supporters were not doing enough for the cause.<sup>98</sup>

Following its success, the ALS association took control of the campaign and pledged to rerun the campaign annually until a cure is found. In subsequent years, the Ice Bucket Challenge has failed to achieve the same level of engagement as seen in 2014.

## Case study 2: Rainbow Laces

In 2013, Stonewall launched the Rainbow Laces campaign to tackle homophobia in sport. According to Stonewall, 43% of LGBT people think public sporting events aren't a welcoming space for LGBT people, and 11% of LGBT people have been discriminated against while exercising or taking part in group sport in the past year.<sup>99</sup> Public opinion was on the side of the campaign, with 49% of British adults in a 2013 poll agreeing that homophobia in sport needed to be addressed, and only 9% disagreeing.<sup>100</sup>

96 Chowdhry, A. (2015). Remember The Ice Bucket Challenge? Donations from the \$220 Million Campaign Enhanced ALS Research. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/amitchowdhry/2015/08/26/remember-the-ice-bucket-challenge-donations-from-the-220-million-campaign-advanced-als-research/#301c36043c6d>

97 Townsend, L. (2014). How much has the Ice Bucket Challenge Achieved? BBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29013707>

98 New York Times (2016). The 'Ice Bucket Challenge' Helped Scientists Discover a New Gene Tied to A.L.S. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/28/health/the-ice-bucket-challenge-helped-scientists-discover-a-new-gene-tied-to-als.html>

99 Stonewall, Rainbow Laces – Come Out Active for LGBT Equality in Sport. Retrieved from: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/rainbow-laces-%E2%80%93-come-out-active-lgbt-equality-sport>

100 Campaign Live (2015). Case study: Paddy Power/Rainbow Laces. Retrieved from: <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/case-study-paddy-power-rainbow-laces/1366883>

The campaign encourages athletes to wear rainbow laces in support of the LGBT community. In the campaign's first year, over 50 clubs took part along with celebrities posting their support to social media, leading to over 320 million Twitter impressions.

By 2019, many clubs had joined the campaign, including those in the Premier League, FA, PFA, and Football League. Forty other brands, including Google and Starbucks, have also shown support by adding rainbows in their adverts during the campaign. Last year nearly 100,000 pairs of rainbow laces were sent to athletes around the country.<sup>101</sup>

The public reception of the Rainbow Laces campaign has been widely positive, and the number of people who believe it is important anti-LGBT language and abuse should be challenged at live sporting events rose from 58% in 2018 to 65% in 2019.<sup>102</sup>

### Strengths of Feel Good campaigns .....

- Tactics are not as controversial as other forms of campaigning, actively aiming to 'bring people with them'. They maintain a positive approach to demonstrations rather than more negative and disruptive approaches.
- They are easy for supporters to get involved with, normally requiring participants to do something small to show their support. However, unlike *Clicktivism* the fact that *Feel Good* campaigns require supporters to take part in some form of activity, wearing certain clothing, or completing a challenge, engenders greater depth of support.
- Message spreads very quickly, as people are asked to nominate or persuade others to take part in the challenge or activity.
- They garner significant support because they tend to arise around less polarising issues. For example, adding a pink streak to your hair in support of breast cancer research.

### Weaknesses of Feel Good campaigns .....

- Supporters face criticism of being narcissistic and lazy activists. The supporters of these campaigns are sometimes

101 Holmes, J. (2019). Rainbow Laces 2019 Launches with Stonewall Sport Champions Announcement, Sky Sports. Retrieved from: <https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11095/11866515/rainbow-laces-2019-launches-with-stonewall-sport-champions-announcement>

102 Stonewall (2019). Majority of Brits Want to Play their Part to Challenge Anti-LGBT Abuse in Sport. Retrieved from: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/majority-brits-want-play-their-part-challenge-anti-lgbt-abuse-sport>

criticised for posting about their charitable donations to make themselves seem like a good person online, rather than genuinely caring about the issue.

- Activity itself can detract from the message of the campaign, with participants enjoying a 'fun challenge' rather than taking on board the campaign message. This can be particularly challenging when the 'novelty' of the activity in question wears off - for instance, the ice bucket challenge was much less successful in subsequent years after its launch.
- Attracts support from those who are already supportive of the campaign and as such do little to change the minds of those not already engaged.

### When are Feel Good campaigns most effective? .....

Similar to *Clicktivism* campaigns, *Feel Good* campaigns are most effective for movements that seek to demonstrate widespread public support quickly. These campaigns give supporters ways to feel actively involved and share their participation online, which makes the content easy to spread and reach new audiences.

*Feel Good* campaigns are most effective for campaigns that are concerned with raising awareness or raising money, rather than influencing policy change.



## Traditional Lobbying

*Traditional Lobbying* campaigns are elite behind-the-scenes campaigns that directly target politicians, regulators, and other decision-makers. They typically use messages rooted in logic, returns on investment, and political impact. They use existing, direct connections with politicians rather than going through the public. In fact, Traditional Lobbying campaigns generally stay as far away from the public spotlight as possible. That said, they will often use opinion polling to show the political upside of supporting their preferred policy position.

Examples of this type of campaign include campaigns to align UK and EU VAT rates for eBooks and audiobooks with that of physical books, which achieved their aims in 2018 and 2020 in the EU and the UK respectively. In the UK, this campaign was spearheaded by the Publishers Association, which led the Axe the Reading Tax campaign. By their nature, lobbying campaigns tend to be obscured from public view, which makes detailed case studies for this type of campaign difficult.

These campaigns will often involve direct meetings with decision-makers, encouraging MPs to ask supportive parliamentary questions or early day motions, and producing policy briefings for members of government. Other less direct forms of lobbying may involve sponsoring events at Party conferences or think tank reports aimed at a political audience. Campaigns may carry out the activity themselves or bring in expert lobbying firms to help deliver the message.

According to public opinion research, lobbying is highly unpopular. In our poll, when asked about a hypothetical campaign to colonise Mars, an average of 38% of respondents claimed that even very 'soft' forms of lobbying – organising a dinner for MPs or building relationships with individual MPs – would make them less likely to support the campaign. This ties into findings from our focus groups; the public want to be 'kept in the loop' and 'levelled with' – lobbying campaigns, which operate largely behind closed doors, could be perceived as lacking transparency.

## Case study 1: The financial industry and EU regulation

The financial services industry has a major lobbying presence in Westminster and Brussels. It has been particularly active in lobbying around new safeguards and regulation following the 2008 financial crisis. A 2014 study found that the financial services industry spends over 120 million annually on lobbying EU institutions, employing over 1700 lobbyists.<sup>103</sup> These lobbyists build relationships with MEPs, Commission officials and the missions of individual countries - advocating to them directly on issues that concern the industry. Many of these lobbyists have themselves had roles within the Parliament or Commission and have relationships with former colleagues there. This has led some to criticise the so-called 'revolving door' of jobs between EU institutions and these lobbying firms.<sup>104</sup>

Financial services lobbyists also respond to consultations on EU policy and have secured strong representation for their sector on official EU institutions' advisory groups, such as the European Central Bank.<sup>105</sup> These groups provide direct advice on the design and implementation of policy. As a result, the financial services industry is able to shape EU policy both through direct engagement with lawmakers and by providing their expert perspective through formal mechanisms such as consultations and the expert groups. These lobbying efforts have been credited with shifting the EU's regulatory approach on a number of issues concerning financial services.<sup>106</sup>

## Case study 2: Renewable Heat Incentive

Many campaigns for renewable energy are carried out in public, as they generally enjoy strong public support. However, renewable energy organisations also lobby government, particularly on legislation that does not capture the public's imagination as easily. One example is the UK's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), designed to increase the use of low-carbon heat.

Lobbyists, in particular the Renewable Energy Association, worked to persuade parliamentarians to speed up the introduction of the RHI, a change that benefitted their backers. During the policy design stage of the RHI, organisations with niche energy outputs, such as

<sup>103</sup> Wolf et al. (2014). *The Fire Power of the Financial Lobby: A Survey of the Size of the Financial Lobby at the EU Level*, Corporate Europe Observatory. Retrieved from: [https://corporateeurope.org/sites/default/files/attachments/financial\\_lobby\\_report.pdf](https://corporateeurope.org/sites/default/files/attachments/financial_lobby_report.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> Financial Times (2020). *EU banking agency criticised over director's move to lobby group*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/835bba98-8af3-444b-87fd-4b14ba822783>

<sup>105</sup> Corporate Europe Observatory, (2020). *Open Doors for Forces of Finance*. Retrieved from: <https://corporateeurope.org/en/financial-lobby/2017/10/open-doors-forces-finance>

<sup>106</sup> Corporate Europe Observatory (2018). *How the Financial Lobby Won the Battle in Brussels*. Retrieved from: <https://corporateeurope.org/en/financial-lobby/2018/09/how-financial-lobby-won-battle-brussels>

biomethane, used their connections with government to increase the legislation's support for their energy production methods, such as biomethane injection. These niche organisations were able to wield significant influence, arguably more so than many incumbent organisations – undermining the common assumption that lobbying is a tool to uphold the status quo.<sup>107</sup>

### Strengths of Traditional Lobbying campaigns .....

Takes the campaign's message directly to decision-makers, and by utilising existing relationships it means that those delivering the message are trusted by policy-makers.

- Delivers more robust, evidence-based messaging than a public facing campaign will allow. It gives the opportunity for lawmakers to probe and interact with the proposals. As many politicians are by their nature generalists, it provides an opportunity for them to hear directly from experts.
- Savvy lobbyists will be cognisant of the particular preferences of each policy-maker, and able to somewhat tailor a campaign's messaging to their interests.

### Weaknesses of Traditional Lobbying campaigns .....

- Unpopular with the public. If a lobbying campaign, or the perception of one, becomes public it can shift public opinion against the campaign, in turn forcing the government's hand against the issue.
- Political decisions are ultimately motivated by public opinion and how that relates to their electoral calculus. A lobbying message will not be effective if it cannot demonstrate that the public are behind it, or at least tolerate it.
- Pure lobbying campaigns lack the potential longevity of a campaign that does gain public support. This means that lobbying campaigns' influence can rapidly decrease as friendly officials or administrations leave office.

### When are Traditional Lobbying campaigns most effective?

Lobbying campaigns are effective when they seek to influence specific pieces of legislation, or where there is a highly technical message best delivered to decision-makers directly.

107 Lowes, R., Woodman, B., & Fitch-Roy, O. (2019). Policy Change, Power and the Development of Great Britain's Renewable Heat Incentive. *Energy Policy*, Volume 131. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421519302903/via%3Dihub>

By remaining outside of the spotlight, building relationships and targeting legislation that the general public often do not hear about, lobbying campaigns are able to become major voices in policy conversations, and can influence policymakers to support their objectives. Once campaigns are moved from specific policies into larger, more general issues, lobbying campaigns face competition from campaigns which are able to gather and mobilise public support, which can drown them out.



## The Strength of Our Argument

These are elite, professionally-led campaigns that use logical messaging and systematic evidence to show the strength of their argument. These campaigns typically use experts – from scientists, economists, industry leaders, to think tanks – to add credibility. They typically engage with mainstream media and social media to appeal to the public. There are numerous examples from recent UK political history, including No to Independence, Stronger In, and the COVID response.

Public opinion research shows the power of these campaigns, but also weaknesses in their approach. A key part of a *Strength of Our Argument* campaign is providing logical messaging, which claims to give the public systematic evidence on the strength of the campaign's narrative. By publicly presenting the weight of evidence on their side, they help the public to feel confident in supporting them and aim to make their cause appear to be a 'no-brainer'. In our poll, 87% of people agreed with the statement that "I want to hear all the information I can before I make up my mind on a political issue", and these campaigns aim to offer so much evidence that people feel they have everything they need to make an informed decision.

However, the person delivering this information matters just as much as the information itself. Our public opinion findings show that people's friends and family are their most trusted source for news, followed by 'people like them'. These groups of people are far more trusted than experts, which may be an issue for *Strength of Our Argument* campaigns, who deploy experts rather than members of the public as spokespeople. However, whilst not trusted as much as friends and family or 'people like them', faith in experts is strong, with 55% of respondents agreeing that experts normally know what is best for the country. It seems that the lack of trust in experts stems from a perceived impartiality, with 69% of respondents agreeing with the statement that "experts have their own agenda when they argue what is best for the country". Our poll also showed that 'condescending' attitudes from experts can substantially undermine their message. Our findings show that for experts to be used effectively by these campaigns, the public must see them as relevant to the campaign, honest, modest and without a hidden agenda.

### Case study 1: Stronger In

Stronger In was the campaign to keep the UK in the EU during the 2016 referendum. Stronger In was professionally organised, with a London headquarters, and regional and local directors. These professional campaigners organised volunteers across the country through online tools such as NationBuilder.

It aimed to convince the public by highlighting the benefits of EU membership, while pointing out the risks associated with leaving the EU. This messaging was made in a logical manner, using a large amount of economic statistics on job losses and GDP impacts. Stronger In deployed experts as messengers, including Mark Carney, then Governor of the Bank of England on the economy, and Frances O'Grady, General Secretary of the TUC, on jobs. The campaign's message was delivered through traditional media, social media, in-person stalls, and leafleting carried out by volunteers. The campaign advertised heavily on social media, focusing particularly on Twitter, whereas the opposing Vote Leave campaign focussed more on Facebook which is used by a more representative cross-section of society. As such, Vote Leave achieved double the volume of online interactions in the 30 days leading up to the referendum.

The UK narrowly voted to leave the EU. Tactics that had worked in a similar campaign – No to Scottish Independence – such as using experts to highlight negative economic consequences of the other campaign winning, were unsuccessful here and powerfully branded “Project Fear” by opponents. During the referendum, the public's trust in politicians and experts also dropped, weakening the campaign's messaging. The campaign's lack of coherent and emotive messaging on the benefits of EU membership undermined its success, allowing the opposing campaign's emotive and anti-establishment rhetoric to succeed.

### Case study 2: 2% Defence

Several organisations, including the Daily Telegraph and think tanks such as the Marshall Fund, campaigned in 2015 for the UK government to meet the NATO target for member nations to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence. This campaign effectively used authoritative figures and organisations to deliver their message, with several think tanks publishing factual reports on the 2% commitment and its importance.

The campaign did not have a formal organised structure and was instead an ad hoc group of individuals and organisations. As such,

it lacked a coordinated online strategy and instead engaged online through organisations, individuals, and politicians discussing the commitment on social media and announcing their support.

The campaign was challenged by some anti-war groups, who generally used more emotive messaging, but still gained political support. In 2015, only UKIP had adopted the 2% pledge as a political party, but by 2017 the pledge was in the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrat manifestos, and David Cameron's Government had committed to the target while in office.

Although the campaign enjoys cross-party political support and was covered extensively in traditional media, our public opinion research found that it had low levels of recognition in both the poll and focus groups. This suggests that some *Strength of Our Argument* campaigns may be better suited for reaching niche/elite audiences.

### Strengths of Strength of Our Argument Campaigns .....

- Can develop a well-researched, reasoned argument that uses experts and facts to deliver a persuasive, authoritative and logical argument.
- Deploy experts to deliver their message, helping to remove the appearance of their arguments being biased or partial – they are technocratic assessments of the evidence, not partisan slogans.
- Focus on the risks of the alternative – while this runs the risk of being perceived as scaremongering, it also plays strongly on behavioural psychology such as loss aversion and bandwagon effects to motivate people towards their cause.

### Weaknesses of Strength of Our Argument Campaigns .....

- An authoritative and factual tone is a strength but can also be a weakness. A factual message delivered by experts, given that it is restrained by its logical tone, lacks the ability to be very nimble and, as such, it can be out-manoeuvred by more emotive messaging, particularly if it is delivered by someone who is seen by the public as 'more like them'.
- Prevalence of 'fake news' can enable a campaign's opponents to present alternate truths, but also undermines wider confidence in any argument grounded in fact.

- They can rely heavily on their factual messaging being seen as credible, but such a result isn't guaranteed – Stronger In being labelled 'project fear' is a powerful example of this.
- The public do not see experts as entirely trustworthy, uncondescending and relevant; our poll found that 69% of respondents agreed that experts have their own agenda when they argue what should be next for the country. If trust in experts drops, so too will support for the campaign.
- Vulnerable to accusations of elitism; experts and prominent figures are by their nature part of the establishment.

### **When are Strength of Our Argument campaigns most effective?**

These campaigns are most effective when the weight of evidence is on their side, and there are a set of clear 'impartial' advocates available. Beyond this, it is a question of how the argument is made, rather than the context of the argument, that is crucial. *Strength of Our Argument* campaigns work when they can combine their rational messaging with some emotive arguments, and use a mixture of expert establishment figures and 'normal' people as advocates. Crucially, these campaigns should take the time to engage with people's concerns, and unpack the most relevant evidence in their favour. This more discursive approach can help avoid the perception of elitism.



## This Affects You

These are grassroots campaigns, sometimes supported by professional ‘organisers’, that mobilise those affected by the campaign’s proposition. They engage with different types of media, using professional campaigners and affected members of the public to spread their message. Beyond the media, these campaigns focus on mobilising their supporters, and use demonstrations and supporter toolkits to show public support. They use this support to highlight the electoral imperative of their cause to then build political support, or more directly to actively elect/defeat supportive/unsupportive lawmakers. They may produce scorecards to measure how supportive a particular lawmaker has been, in order to influence people’s votes. These campaigns can use emotional or logical tones, or both.

Examples include the Women Against State Pension Inequality campaign for women affected by previous changes to the State Pension Age, and the School Cuts campaign to reverse the decline in school funding.

The principle behind This Affects You campaigns is that people are primarily motivated by campaigns and issues that affect them directly, and will be willing to make their voice heard on these topics. This principle was supported in our poll and focus groups, with one middle-aged woman in a Derby focus group explaining that she actively supported cancer campaigns because her family had been directly impacted by the disease.

*“We’ve had cancer in the family so it’s more direct.”*

- Woman, 40s, Derby

In short, by explaining the direct connection that people have with their cause, a campaign has a ready-made supporter base in a way that other campaigns do not.

### Case study 1: WASPI

The Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign, aimed to achieve fair transitional arrangements for all women born in the 1950s affected by changes to the State Pension Age. The changes, according to the campaign, were made without sufficient notice to those affected and were implemented faster than promised.

The campaign is coordinated by the organisation WASPI, with headquarters in London and with local groups throughout the UK. WASPI contains experienced organisers to assist with the creation of local groups, and uses Facebook to help them coordinate.

WASPI mobilises its supporters through mass demonstrations, toolkits for contacting government officials, traditional media coverage, and significant social media use. The WASPI Facebook page has over 100,000 likes and followers, and its Twitter profile has over 20,000 followers – the disparity between platforms is likely due to the demographics of WASPI supporters. The campaign uses both professional spokespeople and ‘ordinary’ WASPI women as advocates.

The WASPI campaign is ongoing and is yet to achieve its aims. However, it has successfully raised the profile of, and support for, the issue, particularly in the 2019 General Election in which Labour pledged £58 billion to WASPI women. Overall, the campaign has achieved a generally sympathetic reaction from the public, and cross-party support, with an APPG on the issue formed in parliament attracting over 120 MPs on its first day.<sup>108</sup> WASPI aims to continue increasing its support base, and pushing MPs for change.

## Case study 2: School Cuts

The School Cuts Campaign aimed to persuade the government to reverse the decline in school funding and to guarantee new money. It is run by School Cuts, an organisation made up of five teaching unions, and is assisted by other national campaigns, such as Save our Schools and Fair Funding for All Schools.

The campaign’s message was very direct and designed to prompt parents into action: “4 in 5 schools in England are still in crisis in 2020 after years of Government cuts. Is your school on the list?” Their website had an interactive map, allowing users to find local-level data on school spending in their area, and encouraged visitors to share it with five parents they know. This messaging helped the campaign to build a strong base of support among teachers and parents whose schools were affected by school cuts. The campaign also attracted support through its publications, which fact checked government releases, and its campaign videos, which received over 1 million views in the 2019 General Election campaign.

School Cuts then mobilised its supporters to contact both politicians

<sup>108</sup> APPG on State Pension Inequality for Women, Background. Retrieved from: [http://www.waspi-appg.org.uk/?page\\_id=38](http://www.waspi-appg.org.uk/?page_id=38)

and the public. The campaign ran a national training day, teaching participants how to raise awareness on the issue, and provided an election toolkit for supporters which showed volunteers how to leaflet in their community, ask their parliamentary candidates to sign the campaign's pledge and how to contact the press. In the 2019 General Election campaign, volunteers delivered over 2 million leaflets to parents and community members, and the School Cuts campaign organised a march on Downing Street involving over 2,000 headteachers.

The campaign was particularly impactful in the 2017 General Election, gaining powerful public support and placing the discourse strongly in favour of extra funding for schools. An election poll found that 10% of respondents who changed their voting intentions did so because of school funding policies.<sup>109</sup> As a result, both the current and previous Governments committed to significantly increased school funding and new minimum pupil funding levels.

### Strengths of This Affects You campaigns .....

- Able to mobilise a directly affected, and therefore highly motivated, segment of society. This allows This Affects You campaigns to present a vigorous front to politicians and the public.
- By being able to generate active supporters they can demonstrate electoral repercussions of supporting/not supporting their cause, which plays a major role in political decision-making. Campaigns occasionally campaign for/against those politicians who support/oppose their cause, which further influences decision-makers' levels of support.

### Weaknesses of This Affects You campaigns .....

- Lacks an easy means to galvanise wider support of the public, outside of the affected group. If the affected group is not large or politically salient enough to grab the attention of politicians or the public, then these campaigns will struggle to gain the attention and support required to be successful.
- Can be seen as overly partisan; this is particularly the case with campaigns that actively try to elect/defeat politicians. If the party unsympathetic to their cause comes to power, their mobilisation efforts are likely to fall on deaf ears.

109 Survation (2017). Labour Party now polling 5% ahead of Conservatives. Public Say Theresa May Should Resign 49 to 38%. Retrieved from: <https://www.survation.com/labour-party-now-polling-5-ahead-conservatives-public-say-theresa-may-resign-49-38/>

## When are This Affects You campaigns most effective?

These campaigns are most effective when there is a clear segment of society that is directly affected by an issue. A This Affects You campaign can then mobilise this group to persuade politicians and the general public of the need for change. These campaigns are most effective in the run up to elections, when the mobilised group can influence the results of a vote. To mobilise the affected group to their full potential, This Affects You campaigns require a campaign team that organises the movement, creating toolkits, scorecards and arranging demonstrations and contacting media and politicians.



## What have we learned about the main campaign models?

In this chapter we presented Public First's six campaign typologies, which were developed from our literature review, campaign profiling and public opinion research findings.

Deciding which typology is most effective for a given moment is a key decision for a campaign. As the analysis in this chapter shows, each typology has different strengths and weaknesses, which should be considered dependent on a campaign's unique goals and audiences. However, campaigns are not static; as a campaign's mission or environment changes, its typology should also change. Similarly, some campaigns will choose to use multiple typologies in order to hit the widest possible audience base – perhaps using *Feel Good* campaigns to reach the public, complemented by Traditional Lobbying campaigns to influence decision-makers.

In Chapter 5, we use these typologies as a foundation to present four possible advocacy approaches for an R&D campaign.

# Chapter 4: Campaigning for R&D

## Chapter 4

# Campaigning for R&D

In this chapter we consider which campaign and advocacy approaches could apply to R&D spending and, in particular, help to secure the UK Government's 2.4% of GDP target. This incorporates findings from the public opinion research, in-depth interviews, and workshops with advocates from across the R&D community, including representatives from academia, charities, and industry.

The chapter is split into two parts. The first helps us to understand the context and baseline for any advocacy approach, by providing an overview of current public perceptions of R&D and investment. The second explores the key questions that any campaigning approach would have to address in light of this context and the diversity of views within the R&D community itself.

### Part 1: What are perceptions of R&D spending today?

#### Summary

There is cross-party commitment to increasing the UK's investment in R&D towards the target of 2.4% of GDP, and even beyond. Yet there are signs that public support is broad but shallow.

Over the past decade the R&D sector has been remarkably successful both in defending R&D spend from austerity and latterly in securing the 2.4% target. This success has happened because of: the strong relationships the sector has built in Westminster and the devolved administrations; the sponsorship of supportive figures at the heart of Government, such as George Osborne, Philip Hammond, Nicola Sturgeon, John Kingman and Dominic Cummings; and the desire from Government to avoid the perception that leaving the EU would reduce the UK's R&D capacity and prowess.

These successes are all context dependent; political priorities ebb and flow, supportive figures move on and the macro economic climate changes. Any such shift could put the commitment to the 2.4% target at risk. The only way to ensure long-term, resilient support for the target is to build direct public support for investment in R&D, which in turn influences and determines political support.

These concerns were shared by interviewees from the R&D community – many recognised the achievement of securing the investment target but had concerns about its durability. Advocates were also concerned about the sector's ability to communicate with

the public, the over-association of R&D with so called 'hard science' (chemistry, physics and biology) and the uneven geographical spread of R&D activity and investment.

### **The public are aware of and support R&D activity, but the depth of their understanding is limited**

To secure public support for R&D the public must know what it is and understand its benefits. In that regard, any future R&D spending campaign starts from a reasonably strong position. The public have high levels of awareness of R&D, with 72% of people saying that they at least think they know what it is, and 86% of people able to correctly identify at least some R&D examples from a list. However, this awareness is limited to what might be thought of as classic examples of R&D, such as 'testing new medicines', when asked about other less obvious forms of R&D public recognition is much lower. This narrow perception of R&D poses risks for the sector. Most pertinently, it means the public does not recognise the tangible benefits of R&D they experience in their everyday lives – from engineering to economics.

Concerns about the shallowness of public support were echoed by the R&D advocates we engaged with, who were worried that R&D investment could lose out when pitched against other highly-tangible



**“Awareness of R&D is limited to what might be thought of as classic examples of R&D, such as ‘testing new medicines’”**

spending priorities – such as the NHS. Their solutions centred around improving either how the sector communicates with the public, or what content it chooses to promote.

In terms of how the sector communicates, interviewees argued that the sector's often scientific style of communication could be overcomplicated, technical, and highly caveated. While this may appeal to an expert audience, it has little cut through with the public who often find it impenetrable. In a similar vein, to some in the sector, the benefits of R&D are so self-evident that they don't merit explanation – this may well be true to those involved in R&D day-to-day, but to the public it risks appearing at best aloof and at worst self-entitled and condescending. Interviewees suggested training more members of the R&D community to advocate in a manner that is 'public friendly'. They also suggested using a range of 'R&D messengers' who reflect the diversity of the public they are seeking to engage, rather than conforming to the image of a researcher as a middle-aged white man. This reaffirms the findings from the public focus groups, where participants said they trusted 'people like them'

- more than high-profile experts and politicians.

Interviewees who wanted to improve the content the R&D sector promotes, stressed the need to link R&D to people's everyday lives. They suggested making the impact of R&D spending more tangible and highlighting the benefits for people, their families, and their communities. The public opinion findings confirmed the need to be tangible, with roughly half of participants preferring government investment to focus on day-to-day services with immediate benefits, such as building new schools or hospitals. Convincing these individuals that R&D should also be a priority will mean demonstrating its quality-of-life value, just like investments in key public services.

Interviewees highlighted the success of those already working to make R&D impacts more tangible to the public - including science centres and museums across the UK, the British Science Association, the Royal Institution, and many others. However, there was clear recognition that the full value of this work was being lost if the sector failed to couple it to long-term advocacy objectives.

### **People value R&D, but not as much as other short-term, tangible spending priorities**

Our opinion research found that, generally, the public would prefer to see government spending prioritised on short-term, tangible spending outcomes, such as day-to-day services, rather than long-term investments, such as R&D.

**“Top-level support for R&D declines once it is weighed up more fully in a discussion about alternative spending priorities.”**

When asked how government spending should be prioritised around half of people (47%) said the focus of spending should be on day-to-day services, while

most of the other half preferred an equal split between day-to-day services and R&D (39%). These findings aligned with responses to the statement, “we currently invest too much in research rather than solving issues that matter now” (33% agreed vs. 35% disagreed). These split findings on the public's priorities contrasted with the feedback from focus groups, where people's priorities for spending were for investments with tangible short-term benefits. This suggests that top-level support for R&D declines once it is weighed up more fully in a discussion about alternative spending priorities.

The short-term nature of public priorities arose during interviews with the R&D community, with many highlighting the difficulties of linking long-term, 'blue skies' research to immediate real-world benefits. In

addition, the fact that much research spending will inevitably not lead to immediate tangible benefits makes R&D spending an attractive target for the charge of ‘waste’. Interviewees suggested countering this by looking at how long-term, ‘blue skies’ research has facilitated modern day innovations that are improving people’s lives today.

When testing support for R&D spending across different sectors, we found that on average respondents allocated about a third (35%) of a hypothetical budget to R&D as opposed to investment in infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals) or workforce (e.g. teachers, nurses). Table 2 presents the detailed findings which suggest a bias towards more tangible short-term investments in the areas of health and education, and towards longer-term investment in R&D in the areas of environment and international development. This makes intuitive sense as the results of short-term investment in health and education – building a new school or hiring 50,000 new nurses – are visible, tangible and impact people’s daily experience. Short-term investments in international development and the environment, however, may feel more distant from daily life. Further, ‘tackling global poverty’ or climate change may be seen as topics with fewer clear solutions, making R&D investment in these areas more attractive.

**Table 2: Average amount of a hypothetical budget assigned to immediate investments in Infrastructure and Workforce, and long-term investments in Research\***

	Short-term		Long-term
	Infrastructure	Workforce	R&D
Healthcare	30%	39%	31%
Military	31%	36%	34%
Environment	35%	22%	45%
Education	32%	42%	26%
International Development	31%	28%	42%
*Question: Imagine the Government has a large amount of money to spend on [topic] in the UK. How would you distribute the money between the following areas: Your answers must add to 100% <i>Due to rounding, proportions above may not add up to 100%</i>			

These results, taken with the effects of intertemporal discounting (in which people generally discount the perceived value of things being received in the future) suggest a major benefit to showing the public how R&D spending can affect people’s lives in the here and now.

## Public R&D priorities

Perhaps counter-intuitively, although the public prioritise short-term impacts over long-term R&D when devising a hypothetical health budget, medical research comes out on top when asked about top priorities for research. In fact, 57% of poll respondents put medical research among their top three areas for research investment.

However, this should be considered in the context of COVID-19, as this poll launched when the pandemic had begun to dominate public



**“Medical research was picked most often as a top area for research investment, followed by environmental solutions.”**

discourse. The high status of medical research may also reflect the public's strong knowledge of R&D in this sector, and the tangible effect it has on their lives.

Beyond healthcare, we find strong support for prioritising R&D on novel environmental solutions (41%), and then a mix of middle tier priorities including security (26%), transport (23%) and economic growth (22%).

Priorities vary significantly according to the age of the respondent. We find younger people lend higher priority to educational R&D (25% compared to 10% for 65+), and for R&D into how to help poorer countries (17% compared to 6% for 65+). On the other hand, older respondents show a preference for R&D relating to economic growth (25% compared to 17% for 18-24) and transport (27% compared to 18% for 18-24). As with the link between Covid-19 and interest in medical research, these differences may be explained by lived experience – for instance why young people give a higher priority to education research. Investment in research on ways to build new houses was one of the few areas that attracted a similar level of middling support across all age groups.

The differences in levels of support for different areas of research are important. Any R&D campaign must consider who it is trying to reach and what messages may be most impactful for the target audience. For example, when targeting an older population, it may be more effective to show the tangible impacts of R&D on economic growth and deploy those messages through mediums that reach that older audiences, such as newspapers or day-time news programmes. On the other hand, when targeting a younger audience, it may be more effective to use messages that display the tangible impacts of R&D on education and deploy those messages through mediums which reach younger audiences, such as social media. Targeting different audiences with tailored messages could help the R&D sector

reach those groups of people overlooked, or ‘turned off’, by current advocacy approaches. This in turn would allow the sector to leverage the full breadth of R&D activity to appeal to a broader segment of the population and build new sources of support.

The public opinion research findings also uncover a sense of pride in the UK’s position as a world-leader in R&D, with 72% of people polled saying that it made them feel proud. This sense of national pride may offer a powerful, emotive lever for an R&D campaign able to make best use of it.



**“72% of people polled said that it made them feel proud that the UK is a world-leader in R&D.”**

We also carried out a segmentation analysis, allowing us to explore differences between the group of people most supportive of R&D, and

those least supportive. The group that highly values R&D are likely to be familiar with the sector – people already engaged with research institutions and their campaigns. To deliver a transformational shift in support, a sector-wide campaign would need to look beyond this group, including to those who are currently unconvinced by the value of R&D, and do not currently engage with the sector. This group tend to value tangible, short-term benefits over investment in R&D and it will therefore be important to craft messages that demonstrate real-world impacts and that directly engage with this audience’s scepticism.

## Part 2: Issues and tensions for an R&D campaign .....

This section explores the key issues that any R&D campaign will need to resolve in deciding on an advocacy strategy. It uses the feedback from our interviews with the R&D community and public opinion research to highlight areas of consensus, and areas of potential tension. It does not seek to provide concrete answers to these questions, but instead informs the series of advocacy models proposed in Chapter 5.

### Audience

#### *Who should this campaign target?*

Having successfully made its case to lawmakers in Westminster and the devolved administrations, gaining the support of many, but not all, political decision-makers, the R&D community must decide whether this elite audience remains sufficient for the Government to follow through on increasing R&D investment, or whether more should be done to engage the public. Interviews with the R&D community uncovered different perspectives on this issue.

Some interviewees saw engaging the public as the best route to durable, cross-party political support. With the current UK Government and Opposition so focused on public opinion, they felt that a failure to engage the public could leave R&D at risk compared

**“The R&D community must decide whether this elite audience remains sufficient for the Government to follow through on increasing R&D investment, or whether more should be done to engage the public.”**

to other priorities (particularly in the context of the post-pandemic economic recovery). Advocates of this approach suggested that building public support now would help

R&D advocacy down the line, especially if it were to face similar scrutiny to the 0.7% commitment to Official Development Assistance, such as accusations of waste. Interviewees stressed the need to build support for R&D spending at an early age, starting with young people in schools. This view tended to be most prevalent among those from research charities and campaigners.

The alternative view was that the R&D community should build on its existing approach – focusing on decision-makers as a more effective and appropriate audience given the technical nature of R&D, and since decision-makers have proven receptive to arguments about return on investment. Those supporting this approach struggled to see the point of a public-facing campaign, ‘why rock the boat’

when there was already cross-party support? Participants from industry expressed hesitation about appearing self-serving – ‘big business campaigning to receive even more money’ – and pointed to perceptions of the pharmaceutical sector as an example. Some in academia were also sceptical about public-facing campaigns, worried that it might fail to deliver a groundswell of support, with direct targeting of decision-makers being more effective.



**“Any campaign should consider whether to target industry as well - both to invest more in R&D and to use the UK as their base for doing so.”**

This divide mirrors the split in the campaign typologies profiled in Chapter 3, with targeted lobbying campaigns providing an effective way to deliver a direct message but being both unpopular and dependent on political whim. Grassroot campaigns, on the other hand, help to build a broader base of support but are by their nature resource intensive and a more circuitous route to securing policy change. For that reason, a third group of interviewees advocated using the approaches in tandem – targeting the public with messages on jobs, innovation, and national pride, and the government with arguments around economic growth and return on investment.

#### *Is industry a participant or a target?*

Industry obviously plays a crucial role in R&D, and some interviewees noted the central role of the private sector in securing the 2.4% target, both through securing continued government support, and delivering the private sector component of the targeted investment. These interviewees highlighted the breadth of the private sector, arguing that some large R&D-intensive businesses, such as car manufacturers, would be natural campaign participants, but that many other businesses did not view R&D investment as a priority.

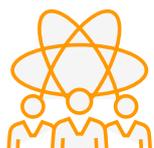
This suggests any campaign should consider whether to target industry as well - both to invest more in R&D and to use the UK as their base for doing so. While there are already many businesses who will be natural R&D advocates and part of the campaign, there are many more who are yet to be convinced of the need to play their part in delivering further R&D spending.

#### **Crafting the message**

Even those interviewees who supported a public-facing campaign highlighted the challenge of communicating the benefits of R&D to a mass audience. R&D is a highly specialised discipline, grounded in

empiricism which presents a three-fold challenge:

- Firstly, it makes it harder to condense the case for R&D into a pithy, persuasive message that can be used in a social media-driven and increasingly populist era.
- Secondly, because of the empirical nature of the profession, some in the research community are inherently sceptical about styles of campaigning that they don't find personally persuasive (such as using a more emotive tone over a fact-based one)
- Thirdly, R&D activity is largely removed from the lives of most people. Some interviewees highlighted the decades-long concentration of R&D activity in the Golden Triangle, which has left many people with no local connection with R&D. As a result, people see R&D as something 'done by others, for others'. Interviewees from academia tended to be the most concerned with the perception of R&D as elitist.



**“Communicating the benefits of R&D to a mass audience is an important challenge.”**

Tackling these issues and the ‘elite’ image of R&D would be central in

developing the message of any public-facing campaign. Throughout the expert interviews and based on the findings of our campaign analysis we explored a number of ways that the R&D community could do this.

These are explored through the series of questions below.

### *Should R&D be grounded in ‘Place’?*

In recent years, the local impact of policy interventions has risen up the political agenda. In our interviews, a number of participants saw a need to move beyond presenting the return on R&D purely through macro-economic figures such as Gross Value Added (GVA). Instead they suggested focusing on the contribution to economic and social well-being in their communities, perhaps learning from the ‘civic universities’ movement.<sup>110</sup> Others called for individual R&D institutions, and particularly industry, to stress their local footprint, the jobs they create and the local concerns they help to address. As the Minister

110 The ‘civic universities’ movement sought to ensure that universities had a clear strategy of civic activity that benefitted their local area, thus providing tangible demonstrations of their value to the public’s everyday lives. UPP Foundation (2019), Truly Civic: Strengthening the connection between universities and their places, Retrieved from: <https://upp-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Civic-University-Commission-Final-Report.pdf>. Similarly, the ongoing Universities for Nottingham project aims to help the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University to harness their civic missions to improve the lives of local people in Nottingham. Universities for Nottingham. Retrieved from: <https://www.universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk/>

for Science, Research and Innovation has argued, this could help to build a sense of community pride in local research activity, in a similar way to pride in local industries and local speciality products.<sup>111</sup>

Many interviewees recognised that the R&D community needed to demonstrate how R&D played into government's 'levelling up' agenda, showing its use as a tool to promote greater regional equity. This opportunity has recently been highlighted by several organisations in the R&D sector.<sup>112</sup> 'The Missing £4 Billion' report published by Nesta highlights the centralisation of the UK's public

**“An R&D campaign must choose whether to demonstrate how R&D plays into the government's 'levelling up' agenda.”**

R&D spending in London, Oxford and Cambridge. They argue that imbalances in regional economic performance

are exacerbated by imbalances in R&D spending; the poorest and least productive areas of the country – the North East of England, Wales and Northern Ireland – are held back by low levels of R&D investment. This ties into several interviewees' desire to see campaign messaging avoid pitching the 2.4% target as the government solving the R&D sectors' problems, but rather the government enabling the R&D sector to solve wider societal problems.

Industry representatives were more confident about aligning with this agenda, as they felt they could make arguments about creating a range of jobs outside of the Golden Triangle. However, those from charities and academia were more nervous – doubting the credibility of claims of spreading investment more evenly. Some interviewees were anxious that this narrative could discourage the government from further investment in the Golden Triangle, which will remain a crucial contributor to UK R&D even if significant investment shifted to the UK's other nations and regions.

Several advocates argued that R&D would only truly align with the UK Government's levelling up ambitions once there was major regional infrastructure investment. At present, they argued that the highest return on investment for many R&D sectors was delivered in the Golden Triangle, which in turn benefited the whole of the UK. They felt any campaign should avoid overpromising on issues such as 'levelling up' due to the risk of detracting from the core mission of delivering high quality R&D. This could be a high-risk strategy, as levelling up is a key part of the Government's agenda for the next

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111 CaSE, (2020). UK Science Minister welcomes new CaSE report 'The Power of Place'. Retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/417569823>

112 Jones, R., & Forth, T. (2020) The Missing £4 Billion, Nesta . Retrieved from: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/the-missing-4-billion/>; Campaign for Science and Engineering, (2020) The Power of Place.. Retrieved from: <http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/resource/placereport.html>

four years, and refusing to engage with it could leave the R&D sector out in the cold.

Levelling up is a values-based debate as much as policy one, and is the type of debate which the R&D community has not traditionally engaged with. However, it is these debates that ultimately define the public mood, especially in a more populist political climate. Ending up on the wrong side could leave the sector looking out of touch. The R&D community will need to decide how far it is willing to engage with concepts such as 'place' in order to build long-lasting and durable support.

### *Should R&D reflect national and regional pride?*

National and regional pride are another example of a values-based debate. It is clear from the public polling and focus groups that grounding R&D in national pride attracts strong support. The public like the idea that the UK is a world leader in R&D, and that cutting-edge innovation can be part of the UK's sense of national or regional identity. The notion that R&D is a national endeavour is also one way to overcome the charge of elitism.

**The public like the idea that the UK is a world leader in R&D, and that cutting-edge innovation can be part of the UK's sense of national or regional identity.**

Some advocates supported taking a patriotic, and even competitive, tone when campaigning for R&D. Several participants felt that a message rooted in

national pride would provide impetus for the UK to become a leader in R&D investment, rather than aspiring to hit the average – to go beyond 2.4% to 3% or more. Industry representatives were particularly supportive, highlighting how it could tie into a Government facing argument about making the UK the best place for businesses to invest in R&D.

Others, however, had concerns about this approach. Many interviewees highlighted the international nature of R&D and the community's global outlook and composition. One participant pointed out that patriotic campaigning may be poorly received in the devolved nations – in particular, a Scottish audience may be averse to a UK-wide patriotic campaign. However, this was not confirmed in the opinion research, where the majority of people stated that they were proud of the UK's position – including respondents from the devolved nations.

One potential solution could be to adopt an inclusive and inspiring tone to the UK being a world leader – similar to the public discourse around the London Olympics. The focus could be on pride in the

UK and its contribution to global progress, celebrating what has been achieved and those it has helped, rather than leaning towards a jingoistic tone. Several interviewees pointed out that the sector can celebrate the UK's R&D strength, while acknowledging that this strength comes in part from our strong international collaboration.

### *How can the impact of R&D spending be made tangible?*

As discussed earlier in this chapter, moving from abstraction to tangibility is key to persuading the most sceptical members of the public to support investment in R&D. Several interviewees highlighted the challenges faced by the international development community to provide concrete examples in defence of the 0.7% ODA target, beyond it being the 'moral thing to do'. They called for the R&D community to better demonstrate real life examples of the benefits of the full range of R&D in a full range of settings. This could help translate people's broad support and interest in 'science' into a more concrete support for investment in R&D – ensuring the link between investment and R&D impacts is clear. This would mean showing how R&D, conducted over both long and short timelines is coming to fruition, and improving life here and now, and also how a variety of R&D disciplines, from engineering to social sciences to humanities, are helping to tackle the big problems of our generation such as climate change, infectious disease, or the future of work.



**“Moving from abstraction to tangibility is key to persuading the most sceptical members of the public to support investment in R&D.”**

Tangibility is particularly important in helping people engage with more abstract concepts. Our focus group participants were unable to engage with abstract notions such as a hypothetical campaign to colonise Mars, but enthusiastically engaged with big concepts, such as climate change, when they understood how it might impact their lives directly. To garner broader public support, the R&D sector must effectively communicate how seemingly abstract and distant concepts have real-world impacts on people's lives.

Some interviewees took this further, suggesting that the focus on 2.4% or 'the input' into R&D was not a good vehicle for public support, as it was intangible to the point of being meaningless. Instead any campaign should focus on the process and outputs of R&D spending to make the case for greater investment. Some believed that this was particularly true in the context of COVID-19, where a 'pushy' campaign demanding more money could easily come

across as crass and self-serving, despite the obvious benefits to people across the UK and the world.

Several interviewees wanted a balance to be struck with respect to tangibility, ensuring that an emphasis on real-life impact did not undermine investment in research where applications were inherently uncertain. A potential route for striking such a balance is to celebrate what comes out of the process of doing the R&D, as well as the outcomes of R&D itself. This could include high-quality, well-paid research and technical jobs it creates, the attraction of new industry to people's local communities, interactions with local schools and the sense of pride that comes with discoveries being made in people's hometowns.

### *Is more optimism needed?*

Interviewees, particularly from the academic and business communities, believed that one way to counter the often 'dusty', arcane image of R&D is to use a positive tone that positions R&D as an exciting and innovative disrupter that will lead to a better future.

Many felt that past R&D campaigns have been unadventurous in this regard, but interviewees suggested this was because parliamentary

**“One way to counter the often ‘dusty’, arcane image of R&D is to use a positive tone that positions R&D as an exciting and innovative disrupter.”**

audiences traditionally welcomed a more nuts-and-bolts argument about metrics such as GVA. Participants felt this traditional approach helped to fend off austerity,

but that the sector was now in danger of dealing too much in cold, technocratic language which jarred with the current wave of political ambition. A more upbeat, emotive campaign might better connect with the public in a time when cold facts appear to be having less cut through. They recognised however that such an approach would be a 'gear shift' for the community and would need to be done without compromising the community's integrity if it were to be endorsed.

### *Should negative campaigning be part of the advocacy toolkit?*

During the interviews we explored to what extent the R&D community were willing to pursue a more negative campaign if, for instance, investment was falling short of the 2.4% target. Many interviewees agreed that this was not the way the community normally operated; previous R&D campaigns have been benefits-focused. With many institutions reliant on Government funding, some were worried that negative campaigning might back policymakers

**“The R&D community must decide to what extent it is willing to pursue a more negative campaign.”**

into a corner, delivering a defensive outcome.

However, a minority of participants felt it could be

appropriate to use a more a challenging tone to defend R&D spending, particularly if it was being pitched against other, more classically popular priorities. Two potential routes were proposed:

- Firstly, showcasing tangible examples of how the UK would lose out if R&D was not prioritised. This might include, for example, British business losing out to international competitors in developing and accessing the next generation of digital technologies – and the resultant lost jobs, investment and income.
- Secondly, highlighting the differences in R&D spending across the devolved administrations. Specifically, this would involve showing how much R&D spending England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales attract, and the benefits it was bringing, as well as highlighting which areas were lagging behind. By drawing comparisons between areas that are so ‘close to home’, the R&D community could help to encourage a race to the top.

#### *What is the role of cross-sector messaging?*

Interviewees highlighted that the R&D community tended to ‘stay in their lane’ when advocating for research funding – with each part of the sector fighting for their own direct funding sources. While there are successful umbrella bodies who advocate for the whole community, to be truly cross-cutting, any future campaign would require each part of the R&D community themselves to argue for policies that would benefit the other parts. For instance, universities

arguing for more R&D tax credits to benefit industry, or industry arguing for the Government to increase university funding.

Participants argued that this would make the community’s

**“The R&D community tends to ‘stay in their lane’ when advocating for research funding.”**

efforts more impactful and ‘greater than the sum of their parts’, while also demonstrating how interconnected R&D was across the economy.

A future campaign will have to consider how to persuade different parts of the sector not just to promote their own specific messages, but to make the broader point about the need for greater R&D investment right across the sector, as one of their top line messages.

### *Should there be deeper engagement with the public?*

Finally, several participants stressed that any campaign should seek to engage and explain the process and breadth of R&D to the public.



**“A campaign may need to stress to the public that R&D is a long-term process; the rewards can be significant, but they aren’t immediate and they aren’t guaranteed.”**

Interviewees highlighted the need for a campaign for R&D investment to stress that R&D is a long-term process; the rewards can be significant, but they aren’t immediate and they aren’t guaranteed. Stating this up front would help people acclimatise to the fact that not all R&D bears fruit. The value of honesty was confirmed in the focus groups, where participants emphasised that they wanted to be ‘levelled with’ from the start of a campaign. Interviewees argued that this honesty would make the community more credible and offer a chance to remind the public that the benefits of R&D can be unexpected and in seemingly unrelated sectors. One suggestion was that the campaign should create an R&D roadmap, articulating milestones in the R&D process as an effective way to familiarise and inform the public of the long-term nature and indirect nature of progress in R&D. One campaign, which combines this approach with making the outcomes of research investment more tangible is CRUK’s ‘Right Now’ campaign which uses human examples to show how research is leading to people being successfully treated for cancer today.<sup>113</sup>

To combat the over-association of R&D with the ‘hard sciences’, a number of participants thought that the campaign should engage with the public about the true breadth of R&D – in particular the contribution of research in the humanities, social sciences, and creative domains. They believed that this was important to broaden the base of support for R&D and to avoid attempts from government to ‘divide and rule’ in terms of investment priorities. Several participants believed that a first step would be the consistent use of the phrase ‘research’ instead of ‘science’ throughout the campaign, though this term itself may end up excluding some types of innovation.

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113 Cancer Research UK, Research is Working Right Now. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/rightnow-campaign>

## Delivering the message .....

Alongside message content, both the opinion research and R&D community interviews provided insights into the key questions on how to communicate any message on R&D spending, they were:

- Who should deliver the message?
- Which parts of R&D should be covered?
- Which platforms and structures should a campaign use?

This section considers each of these questions in turn.

### *Who should deliver the message?*

There was near universal agreement from R&D community interviewees that the ideal advocates for R&D were the people involved in it. Interviewees argued that third party advocates could bring their own baggage, and that celebrities might struggle to appear credible.

However, there was disagreement over which parts of the sector are the most appropriate and effective communicators. Interviewees had different views on whether industry or academia made for better advocates. Opinion polling offers some insight, with the public evenly split on whether private companies are “better at research”



**“A campaign should use both academic and industry researchers as advocates.”**

than academic institutions (26% vs. 27%).<sup>114</sup>

Combined with other poll findings

and the public’s openness to a variety of messengers, this suggests a campaign should use both academic and industry researchers as advocates. This perhaps challenges the view of some in the R&D community that industry spokespeople would be regarded as self-serving and wouldn’t cut through with the public.

Interviewees called for different voices to be deployed depending on the audience. For instance, the government may be more influenced by tech and industry, and younger people may find it easier to relate to early career researchers.

The broader challenge, as highlighted in Part 1 of this chapter, is to build the next generation of R&D communicators; almost all participants acknowledged that many R&D practitioners do not have the appetite or skills to act as effective public-facing advocates.

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<sup>114</sup> 37% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that private companies are better at research than academic researchers, while 10% responded that they did not know.

Any campaign would have to consider how to nurture this next generation of research communicators. In line with the opinion research, interviewees pointed to David Attenborough as an example of a powerful and relevant advocate, followed by Brian Cox. Beyond these two there was a shortage of scientific figures who could communicate with such clarity and respect, and there were too few women associated with research in the public eye. Any future

**“Any campaign will have to consider how to strike the balance between using participants in research and beneficiaries of research as messengers, both of whom will have their own strengths in delivering the case for research investment. “**

campaign must address this narrowness of representatives for the sector.

In the context of COVID-19, some attendees pointed out that the public’s appreciation of experts has risen, which could make them more powerful advocates for R&D investment.

We further explored the extent to which the public themselves should be encouraged to be ambassadors for the benefits of research. Public opinion research suggests that this approach could be effective, as participants reported having the highest levels of trust in the views of friends, family, and ‘people like them’ and people who have benefited directly from research would be potentially compelling, authentic advocates. Some interviewees tended to see the public as the recipients of the messaging, rather than as active messengers. Others, however, argued that citizen advocates would be crucial for persuading the public, providing a figure who looked and acted like them as a face of the campaign, and undoing R&D’s perception as an elitist endeavour. Any campaign will therefore have to consider how to strike the balance between participants in research and beneficiaries of research, both of whom will have their own strengths in delivering the case for research investment.

#### *Which parts of R&D should be covered?*

There was a mixed reaction from interviewees on how to deal with the public’s over-association of R&D with applied ‘hard sciences’ research. Many representatives from these disciplines favoured a broader message which encompassed blue-skies research and the social sciences and humanities, while several representatives from those underappreciated communities believed it was better to ‘piggyback’ on disciplines such as medical research which have a public profile. They believed that making popular and well-known disciplines such as medical research the face of the campaign could help to achieve a deeper level of public support for the whole sector and attract funding for their discipline by association.

Deciding how to leverage the predominant public profile of medical research will be a central question for an R&D campaign. Interviewees felt that the health and technological benefits stemming from R&D provided the most visible and tangible demonstrations of benefits of investment. Our polling found that people are more likely to support



**“Deciding how to leverage the predominant public profile of medical research will be a central question for an R&D campaign.”**

investment into medical research over other types of R&D, likely because medicine has a direct impact on their life or

their loved one’s lives. Furthermore, a focus on medical research can tie R&D to the NHS, rather than pitching it as a competing priority for public spending. Public support for medical research could then be harnessed to benefit other areas of R&D through a “rising tide lifts all boats” approach.

However, participants also recognised that if the sector focuses its messaging on medical research it will continue to perpetuate the public’s over-association of the ‘hard sciences’ with R&D. This risks diminishing the status of other disciplines, ultimately leading to funding being diverted. This left the community divided on whether to adopt a simpler, narrow message in the hope of spill over benefits for all disciplines, or whether to pursue a more nuanced but complex approach that promotes the value of the whole sector. One suggestion to resolve this was to adopt a ‘challenge based’ approach to make the case for investment, rather than an approach based on a discipline. For instance, medical research is obviously rooted in biology and chemistry, but solving a major health issue such as obesity also requires a much broader range of research – including the social sciences and behavioural psychology – all of these disciplines and others will need research investment if obesity is to be tackled.

Several interviewees also believed it would be important for a campaign to capitalise on the humanities and social sciences ability to create moments that capture the public’s imagination, such as the discovery of Richard III’s body. They stressed that any campaign should bring ‘softer sciences’ to life, by focusing for instance on how the social sciences can also help to tackle today’s big problems, such as the future of work, or the contribution of research in the arts to people’s wellbeing.

## What structures and platforms should be used?

### Structures

Interviewees almost all agreed the campaign should adopt a coalition-based approach. They envisioned a campaign which drew input from across the sector and benefited from a broad range of insights. Participants saw strength in numbers, and believed a coalition-based approach would better enable a consistent message across the sector.



**“There was disagreement about how much input coalition members should have in the campaign.”**

However, interviewees disagreed about how much input coalition members should have in the campaign. Some favoured a high degree of involvement, to secure buy-in from the diversity of R&D actors and to ensure that messages were appropriate for all members.

Others favoured a more arm’s-length approach, with a separate semi-autonomous organisation advised by the sector to run the campaign – this organisation could then be nimbler and more effective. They worried a campaign run directly by coalition members would become trapped in a loop of consulting or be forced to take a ‘lowest common denominator’ approach to get all coalition members on board.

### Platforms

R&D community interviewees strongly believe an R&D investment campaign should use both traditional and social media to broadcast its message. However, there were differences on how they felt these mediums should be deployed. Generally, participants believed that different platforms should be used in tandem, with the broadsheet media and broadcast (The Times, The Today Programme, etc.) primarily used to reach decision-makers, and social media and more popular media (Tabloid press, entertainment TV, Breakfast TV) used to reach the public at large. The latter channels are seen as particularly important for tackling perceptions of elitism.

**“R&D community interviewees strongly believe an R&D investment campaign should use both traditional and social media to broadcast its message.”**

Interviewees highlighted the strong digital presence of the UK Government’s Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Medical Officer

during the COVID-19 pandemic as setting a trend that others in the research community should follow. While some participants supported the use of Twitter, Facebook was generally seen as the better medium for reaching those who are not already highly politically engaged and may be more conducive to pushing positive messages. This is in line with our early findings from the campaign profiling.

Some participants were nervous about the use of traditional media in an R&D campaign, claiming that they have a tendency to misunderstand and oversimplify research. This was exemplified through contrasting newspaper front pages in the Guardian<sup>115</sup> and Daily Mail<sup>116</sup>, during the Covid-19 lockdown. Both headlines were based on the same piece of research, but the Guardian ran a story saying the research showed the importance of maintaining 2 metre distancing to tackle Covid-19 while the Daily Mail reported that the study suggested 1 metre distancing was sufficient. Other participants, however, argued that traditional media was something that the R&D community should engage with, and that attempting to caveat every single message might risk overshadowing the campaign's core



**“Participants doubted that people would be willing to ‘march for research’”**

message. It is worth noting that there are already organisations, such as the Science Media Centre and Sense About Science, that do good work in supporting

scientific literacy and good practice in the media. An R&D advocacy campaign that engages with traditional media would do well to build on and amplify these existing approaches.

Public activism in the form of rallies or marches was broadly rejected as a campaign medium. Participants doubted that people would be willing to “march for research” and were concerned that any such public demonstration would appear to be a self-serving, ‘feel good’ moment for the community themselves, while annoying everyone else. Some participants highlighted that Scientists for EU had tried this approach and generated big numbers, but even with this swell of support it had struggled to be heard in a very crowded debate. Others, particularly in the charitable sector, felt that the scale of investment being targeted would require a large number of ‘ordinary’ people to be visibly seen calling for it. While these representatives did not necessarily mean mass demonstrations, they did believe it was important to find some way of mobilising mass support.

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115 Siddique, H. (2020). Risk of Infection Could Double if 2-metre Rule Reduced, Study Finds, Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/01/risk-of-infection-could-double-if-2-metre-rule-reduced-study-finds>

116 Hayward, E., & Matthews, S. (2020). Is one metre enough? Risk of Infection is 1.3% at two metres or 2.6% at one metre, reveals WHO as calls mount for social distance measure to be relaxed, Mail Online. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8377151/Keeping-one-metre-apart-slashes-risk-catching-coronavirus-80.html>

A minority of interviewees preferred to see an emphasis on elite messaging mediums, such as reports and All-Party Parliamentary Group events, which have a higher chance of reaching MPs and decision-makers directly.

### Topical contextual challenges

#### COVID-19

Most participants recognised that COVID-19 has radically changed the context of an R&D campaign. Some of the effects have been positive; there is increased trust in – and prevalence of – experts, and people are more aware of the benefits of health research. If a vaccine is found quickly then the benefits of R&D are likely to be well-known and understood by the public.



**“COVID-19 has radically changed the context of an R&D campaign.”**

However, participants recognised that COVID-19 also brings challenges – most obviously that the

public’s focus on spending will likely shift towards immediate issues, such as health and economic recovery. In this context, the public may not be receptive to an R&D campaign pushing for extra funding. Several participants thought that the sector should promote its ability to drive the post-pandemic economic recovery and build the UK’s resilience, to align with the public’s priorities. Other participants suggested that COVID-19 provided a hook to highlight other major challenges, such as climate change, to frame R&D as a solution.

A further group worried that the competing ‘models’ of COVID-19, the lack of scientific consensus on issues such as the lockdown, and the possibility that a vaccine may not be found, could undermine the public’s confidence in research and leave any campaign starting on the back foot.

#### Further vulnerabilities

Beyond public opinion, there were shared concerns about the future of the sector and the chances of increased investment. Interviewees were all worried about the future of research talent, especially in the context of Brexit, and were concerned that the UK’s education systems may not be able to deliver the number of skilled researchers required. This speaks to a broadly-held concern that reaching the 2.4% target is not just about money, but also about having the workforce and infrastructure to advance R&D. These issues are much more difficult to address in a campaign than the financial

target, particularly in the case of skills, where the R&D community favours a more permissive immigration policy than the public at large. Interviewees were concerned about the government ‘picking winners’, but they differed in their views of how R&D spending might be refocused to government priorities. Academic and charitable representatives tended to worry that R&D spending would be overly diverted into the levelling up agenda, damaging world-leading institutions based in the Golden Triangle.



**“There is a broadly-held concern that reaching the 2.4% target is not just about money, but also about having the workforce and infrastructure to advance R&D.”**

Across the R&D community, academics were the most concerned about the future – citing the uncertain status of their funding (related to COVID-19 and the future of tuition fees), the potential implications of the government’s perceived hostility to the university sector, and concerns that industry lacked interest in partnerships with them.

Finally, the likelihood of COVID-19 instigating an economic recession following the lockdown, calls into question the usefulness of the 2.4% target itself, which can be reached either by growing research spending, or by a major economic contraction. Reaching 2.4% because the UK’s economy is smaller would be to hit the target and miss the point. As such, interviewees stressed that any campaign would have to focus on increasing the quantum of research spending, rather than simply the share.



## What have we learned about campaigning for R&D?

Alongside the traditional process of establishing a campaign highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2, the R&D community will also need to resolve the tensions described in this Chapter. Should a future advocacy model be elite facing or target the public? To what extent should the R&D community engage in values-based debates? How far can the rest of the sector piggyback on support for medical research? How sustainable is that? These are just some of the key decisions that a future R&D investment campaign will have to make. The answers will hinge on the sector's willingness to engage in campaigning and advocacy approaches that resonate with the public, and may go beyond the community's comfort zone. Clearly there is a balance to be struck, but our campaign case studies clearly show that trying to 'fudge' these hard choices significantly diminishes the ability of a campaign to deliver its objectives.

# Chapter 5: Advocacy approaches for R&D

## Chapter 5

# Advocacy approaches for R&D

In this chapter, we will present four potential advocacy approaches for the R&D community. These approaches are illustrative and bring together the findings from the previous four chapters on successful campaigning techniques and perceptions of R&D.

These approaches are deliberately not mutually exclusive; although it is helpful to consider them as distinct when conceptualising a future campaign, a well-rounded long-term campaign could use tactics from each at different times.

Based on our evidence-gathering and conversations with advocates, we envisage the activity in each model being led and driven by an independent body. It could be guided by an advisory group of members from the R&D community, but should pursue a defined and jointly agreed objective with operational freedom on how to achieve that goal. This would ensure that a campaign for R&D investment was both nimble and effective, but also informed by the community. Crucially it should not seek to replicate or usurp the work of existing institutions, but instead build on their output and provide support, expertise and insight for existing bodies to amplify their impact as part of a united advocacy community.



## Advocacy Approach 1

# Build popular support for research investment

### Summary

This model is built on two assumptions:

- 1) The best way to build enduring support for R&D spending is through the public.
- 2) The biggest barrier to building public support behind the sector's advocacy is the lack of a tangible connection between R&D and people's everyday lives.

This approach is fundamentally about building an attractive image of R&D in the mind of the general public, and firmly connecting this to investment. It would use a variety of channels (online, traditional media, educational institutions) to make a visible connection between R&D and everyday life, and present R&D investment as the solution to tackling the big problems of our day – these are the two factors that the opinion research highlighted were most important for building support for R&D.

These advocacy approaches would be co-ordinated by an organisation whose remit is explicitly to build popular support for research investment. That would involve:

- Collecting and curating evidence that demonstrates the contribution of R&D at a local as well as national level;
- Building a diverse network of effective and engaging 'research communicators' whose remit is to advocate for R&D;
- Identifying opportunities to deploy these communicators, and publicise R&D content through traditional, social, and entertainment media outlets.



### Audience

This campaign would be public-facing, using a variety of mediums and messengers to reach a broad swathe of the population with tailored content. It would be a long-term endeavour as shifting public opinion takes more time than shifting the views of individual decision-makers. But the clear aim would be that within a decade the public at

large would be convinced that spending on R&D represented good value for money and should be a top-tier priority for government.

Such an approach would readily reach the segments of the public who are already interested in R&D. Our public opinion research shows that these people tend to be younger, urban and highly-educated. Our discussions with the R&D community found that these were also the groups most likely to visit scientific institutions, such as centres and museums. This pattern starts from a young age, with young people from more affluent backgrounds more likely to engage in science activities than those from more disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>117</sup>

However, any campaign to popularise research would have to move beyond the ‘already engaged’, who do not comprise a large enough group to sway public opinion. Instead the primary audience for this model would be those less engaged by existing schemes, with the aim of persuading them of the benefits of R&D spending to their lives, families and communities. The public opinion research shows one of the most effective techniques for persuading this group is using messages that emphasise the local benefits and tangibility of R&D. We explore this further below.

The campaign would marshal this broad public support for R&D to convince decision-makers that it represents a prudent political priority for increased expenditure. A subsidiary goal of this campaign would be to remind decision-makers themselves of the tangible benefits of R&D – enabling them to see exactly how R&D has benefited their area and the support this has generated among their constituents. Such engagement would need to be robustly non-partisan to build durable support across the political divide.



### Message

This campaign would promote the message that R&D is exciting and has real, tangible impacts on people’s lives. It would seek to turn R&D from an abstract idea into a more concrete term, with clear benefits to individuals and communities. This message would be delivered with an optimistic and emotive tone, providing tangible examples of how R&D benefits the general public. It would highlight the benefits from the results of R&D, e.g. lives saved from a new medicine, as well as the direct benefits from investment in R&D, e.g. jobs created in the local community. The benefit of using messages that highlight the direct impact of investment in R&D, such as job creation, is that

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<sup>117</sup> Wellcome Trust (2020). Science Education Tracker 2019. Retrieved from: <https://wellcome.ac.uk/reports/science-education-tracker-2019>

they are immediately felt, avoiding one of the perennial problems of engaging the public on R&D spending – a lack of short-term results.

The messages should include a variety of examples of R&D to combat the over-association of R&D with the ‘hard sciences’ (biology, chemistry and physics) found in the public opinion research. This overlooks important R&D activity in other disciplines which is often more relevant to people’s life and work, such as management research or innovation in the creative industries. Therefore, the campaign should highlight the full range of R&D, including the often-undervalued social sciences and humanities. This will help show the range of benefits R&D has for people and make the case for broad, rather than narrow, investment in R&D.

While the overall tone should be one of promise, our literature review and focus groups clearly indicate that loss aversion works, and negative messages can be memorable. Therefore, there is scope for messages such as, ‘imagine a world without research discoveries.’ Or perhaps a contrast between the discoveries taking place in other nations across the world, with the warning that the UK risks falling behind. However negative messages alone will not build durable support, and must be accompanied by constructive and positive messages to balance levels of awareness and support.

A tenacious focus on tangible examples and narratives will mean adopting a new style of communication across the R&D community, which may feel less familiar to some advocates. It means fewer caveats, fewer discussions about process, and greater focus on the promise and outputs of R&D. Clearly a campaign should not over-promise – it should point out that R&D involves dead-ends and misfires, as well as innovations and unexpected gains – but we know that the right combination of clarity and ‘levelling’ with the public can build trust and support.

As well as communicating the return on investment on the macro scale, a campaign should provide tangible examples on a local and regional level, helping to rebuild the connection with R&D particularly outside of the Golden Triangle. That doesn’t mean shying away from R&D’s role in tackling the shared ‘challenges of our day’, but even R&D’s contribution to macro problems such as climate change should be described through the prism ‘how does this make life better in a particular community?’. This might be through personal stories and case studies to demonstrate real-life impacts. The public opinion research shows that messages highlighting local and tangible benefits are persuasive for people who are less interested in research. Therefore, these types of messages will be critical in garnering new support.

The public opinion research also shows that linking the UK's R&D endeavours to national pride resonates with the public. Any campaign to build popular support for research should embrace this – pointing to the UK's scientific heritage, our current world-leading contributions, the lives these discoveries change, and the potential for the future.

Finally, any message must be clear that R&D itself is not the desired goal, but that spending on research leads to good things. This would help to tackle the R&D community's concern that while the public are broadly supportive of research, this does not link through to an urgency to increase spending on R&D. Stories should therefore be pitched as 'because of investment in \_\_\_\_\_, we have been able to do \_\_\_\_\_, which means \_\_\_\_\_ for you'



## Messengers

We envisage this campaign having three tiers of messengers: experts, 'beneficiary advocates', and the general public. Each of these messengers would bring their own advantages and be used to target different groups.

### *Experts*

This campaign would primarily be delivered by the first tier of messengers: experts, i.e. researchers and institutions talking about the work they do. The campaign would provide opportunities to train researchers to do this at scale – through fellowship schemes to 'buy-out' a portion of their time, or research advocacy secondments. It would then actively identify platforms for them to talk about their work, locally and nationally.

We envisage this approach manifesting in the creation of a new institute (perhaps an offshoot of an existing organisation or university) which is dedicated to training researchers from across the R&D sector on how to communicate more effectively as advocates. This institute would select and train a small number of people, up to 100 a year, to allow for real in-depth training and engagement through a paid fellowship scheme. The researchers would then commit to engaging in 'communications activity' for a few days a month. Each 'cohort' of researchers would have a mix of industry and academia delegates, as well as a diversity of disciplines.

It is important that these communicators reflect the diversity of modern Britain and help to actively dispel the stereotype of researchers as older, white, straight men. They should aim to move the R&D community out of its comfort zone and answer questions

from the public on a level footing. Doing so will help to regain public trust and dispel misconceptions about who does R&D and who benefits from it.

With many institutions already doing excellent work to promote science communicators, this campaign model would focus on broadening their work by nurturing a new cohort of research investment advocates with strong communication skills, working with them over a decade or more to promote their work.

### *Beneficiary Advocates*

To reach the broadest possible audience, the campaign would deploy a second tier of messengers: 'beneficiary advocates', i.e. people who have directly benefited from R&D in the local community. This could take the form of businesses, former patients, engineers, or others, who share personal stories of how R&D has affected their lives. Amplifying the voices of everyday people will be important as our public opinion research shows 'people like me' are among the most trusted sources of information. Again, the campaign/institute would have responsibility for identifying, training, and deploying this group.

### *General public*

A third tier of messengers – the general public – would be nurtured through enabling members of the public to share user-created content organically. The campaign should provide an online toolkit to help these community-based advocates create their own messages and share how R&D has affected them personally. This might involve a hashtag for people to engage with, a ribbon or badge for people to wear to show their support, or – learning from *Feel Good* campaigns – launching a monthly 'research challenge' where people submit videos pitching an area they think should be a priority for R&D investment. Helping people feel they have a stake in what research is being carried out would be a powerful tool to secure their long-term support.

Unlike the beneficiary advocates, these community-based advocates would not receive formal training from the campaign; instead, they would be encouraged to take part in online activity, using templates and material from the central campaign to make their voice heard in support of research investment on social media.



### **Medium**

This campaign model would use the full span of communication channels in order to target different audiences including online, traditional and entertainment media.

### *Online platforms*

Online platforms such as the campaign's website and social media channels would share and socialise content. The campaign would target a mix of popular platforms – Instagram, Facebook, YouTube – rather than being overly-reliant on more politically-dominated arenas such as Twitter. As much content as possible would be delivered by advocates of the campaign – for instance, researchers on the advocate programme would be supported to build their own social media channels to reach people directly about their work.

### *Traditional media*

Traditional media should not be neglected, and the campaign should place stories in the popular press and on breakfast TV – again avoiding over-reliance on elite-facing channels such as the broadsheets, Newsnight or the Today programme. Where possible, the trained research advocates should be deployed on a local as well as national level – such as local news broadcast and newspapers – we know local news enjoys much higher levels of trust and allows for more tailored messaging.

### *Entertainment media*

Entertainment media is a powerful outlet for reaching those less engaged in current affairs, and many campaigns have raised awareness by weaving their cause – from domestic violence to mental health – into soap operas and other TV programmes. This campaign should do the same with R&D, proactively offering stories to producers. When it comes to science programmes, such as popular nature documentaries, the campaign should ensure the contribution of R&D to the topic is clear, and that this is linked to investment in the viewer's mind.

### *Schools and universities*

We also recommend that the campaign highlights the R&D community's engagement with schools and universities. This engagement has a dual benefit – firstly showing how the R&D community 'gives back' to local communities, and secondly promoting the benefits of R&D to young people from an early age, making them more likely to appreciate the need for R&D spending in adulthood.



### **Timing**

This campaign involves building new infrastructure and training schemes which take time to establish and yield results. Given that

changing public opinion – particularly through awareness raising – is a long-term endeavour, we would recommend establishing the model and the required infrastructure as soon as possible.



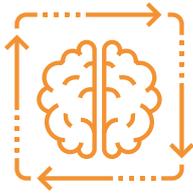
### Pros

- By making R&D more tangible, this campaign would be particularly effective at garnering new support among the public. The public opinion research shows this is the best way to reach those who are less interested in R&D.
- This level of public engagement means that decision-makers are more likely to see the political utility, and practical benefits, of increased R&D investment.
- The public opinion research shows that the tactics outlined in this method are effective ways to engage the general public. The public already trust and respect popular broadcasters and scientists such as David Attenborough and Brian Cox, and this campaign would train more of these respected and trusted research communicators in ways to reach new audiences.
- This campaign addresses the biggest weakness of existing R&D advocacy work, as expressed in interviews with the R&D sector – a dearth of effective and diverse communicators who can effectively engage with the public and draw the link between their support for R&D and support for increased investment.



### Cons

- This approach requires a significant shift in the way the sector currently approaches campaigning, demanding a bolder approach to outreach and less nuance when talking about the outputs of research and the investment needed to produce them. It would also require the sector to embrace messaging themed around Britain's role as a global leader in R&D, a theme that some in the R&D community may find uncomfortable.
- This approach will require a lot of upfront investment but will not generate immediate results. It will require sustained effort for the R&D community to enjoy the long-term pay-offs of such an approach.
- Generating tailored content for this model would require the collection and curation of large volumes of local evidence, making it resource-intensive.



## Advocacy Approach 2

# An R&D think tank

### Summary

This campaign model is built on two assumptions:

- 1) The most effective way to secure R&D investment is to lobby decision-makers in Westminster and the devolved administrations, along with other key influencers.
- 2) Effective lobbying requires a robust evidence base for R&D which demonstrates its role in delivering current political priorities, such as the 'levelling up' agenda.

This model builds on the community's existing lobbying efforts by providing a 'one-stop-shop' evidence repository that organisations can use to champion R&D. It would produce a steady stream of 'evidence outputs' to demonstrate the value of different aspects of R&D on a national, regional and constituency level. It would amplify existing lobbying efforts by tightly aligning these R&D impacts to emerging political priorities and 'hot topics' – be it mental health or tackling extremism – and coupling this to a focus on 'place'.



### Audience

This campaign's audience would be politicians, both in Westminster and the devolved nations, as well as influencers such as newspaper editors, other think tanks and commentators. The campaign should build long-term, direct relationships with these decision-makers and their advisors, in order to build trust.

While the outputs of this R&D think tank would be shared in the broadsheet press and on current affairs broadcast, the campaign would not seek to reach a mass audience. Instead, the focus would be on targeting decision-makers directly with tailored and well-researched messaging.



### Message

This campaign would focus on how R&D supports political priorities and benefits the UK as a whole and at a community level – particularly outside of the Golden Triangle.

The tone of the message should be logical, fact-based, and tailored for the decision-maker in question. The message should help individual decision-makers understand how R&D spending will support their wider objectives and, in the case of politicians, what R&D does for their constituencies now and what it has done in the past.

We imagine that outputs from the new think tank might include:

- A comprehensive update of the evidence base for R&D, replacing over-used, decade-old statistics with fresh evidence about the benefits to the UK economy and the Global Britain agenda and its devolved equivalents.
- Developing a portfolio of evidence on the benefits of R&D in the UK's nations, regions and communities, with clear links to the levelling-up agenda and case studies on the impact of individual research institutions.
- Compiling focus group tested examples which communicate the value of R&D in daily life for different demographics across the UK.
- Authoritative commentary and analysis on relevant UK political events, such as Budgets and manifestos, and what they mean for R&D investment.
- Rapid, evidence-led rebuttals of media or commentator attacks on R&D and, in particular, accusations of wasteful spending.
- Scorecards for individual parliamentarians or devolved administrations to highlight and contrast levels of commitment to research.
- Case studies of the impact of R&D and the work of individual institutions.

While the campaign would engage parliamentarians through traditional routes (e.g. direct meetings, report launches, or dinners), it would be using more regional and tangible messaging. The outputs should be focused on ensuring decision-makers can easily see what they get back from investment in R&D.



### Messengers

The campaign organisation would lead some direct engagement to build up its own links with decision-makers and influencers. It should also host a programme of events in order to publicise its work on the

impact of R&D, and engage directly with commentators on Twitter.

However, we envision this campaign primarily working through existing influencers, who already have credibility with decision-makers, to deliver messages about the benefits of R&D. This would draw on senior figures across the sector, such as university Vice-Chancellors, business leaders, and other well-known R&D experts, to make the case to high-profile decision-makers and lead media interviews.

Finally, we envision the think tank supporting individual R&D organisations in their own lobbying efforts, using the think tank's evidence base to support them. The think tank would provide support for channelling and refining messages, and demonstrating their impact in a way that resonates with current political priorities. By sharing messages and outputs across the R&D community it would ensure that individual lobbying operates in a co-ordinated way that benefits the whole sector.



### Medium

This campaign would use a variety of different channels in order to promote its work. It would use traditional (primarily broadsheet media) and social media (most likely more 'politically engaged' platforms such as Twitter) to share the evidence base for investment in R&D. It would engage both proactively – placing stories which highlight the benefits of R&D – and reactively – using political developments to make the case for, or to defend, R&D spending.

Alongside traditional lobbying formats and events, the campaign would seek to bring R&D investment to life by working with institutions to organise community visits and events which show MPs what R&D is doing in their local area.



### Timing

This campaign would be ongoing, but ramped up at key moments such as the lead up to Spending Reviews, Budgets and elections.



### Pros

- This approach addresses concerns from the R&D community that the evidence base for R&D is out of date. A centralised approach is the only cost-effective way to build and curate

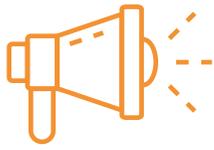
the best evidence – this would otherwise be too much of a burden on individual organisations.

- This approach builds on the success of the sector’s previous lobbying efforts- but ensures that decision-makers are being given messages about how R&D applies to current priorities, particularly around ‘place’ and ‘levelling-up’ rather than simply its macro-level contribution.
- This campaign directly targets the people who ultimately make decisions about the future of R&D. This approach is more straight-forward and does not require mobilising the public to indirectly influence decision-makers.
- It would be relatively easy to get different members of the community to agree to this approach, as it is an expansion of what has always been done. It also avoids the possible perception of R&D being ‘ungrateful’ and publicly campaigning for something that already enjoys a political consensus.



### Cons

- This approach does not directly drive public opinion at a time when both the UK Government and Opposition are particularly sensitive to it. Without the public on side, R&D risks losing out when political trade-offs are made against other areas with more public support. As such, what this approach gains in efficiency it loses in durability.
- There is a danger that an approach driven by elite lobbying and the production of hard evidence falls into the trap of some *Strength of Our Argument* campaigns, which make a compelling case for their cause, but which appear condescending or out of touch to the public.
- The R&D think tank could struggle to emerge as a distinctive voice and may be lost among wider institutional lobbying. This would make it difficult to coordinate a single cohesive message to present to the decision-makers, which could muddle the entire campaign.
- Our public opinion research shows that the public dislike lobbying in any form. Therefore, it could be very damaging to the campaign if it were to appear underhand, and that R&D was exercising undue influence on lawmakers. It could also entrench the idea that R&D is elitist and part of the establishment rather than an exciting disrupter.



## Advocacy Approach 3

# Activism

### Summary

This campaign is built on the following two assumptions:

- 1) To guarantee R&D spending, the R&D community must demonstrate significant public support, making it politically unattractive to take any other course of action.
- 2) Visible demonstrations of community engagement with R&D from politically salient groups will help to safeguard spending.

This campaign would engage and mobilise people who are passionate about R&D, building a grassroots mass of individuals willing to go out and loudly advocate for research. The campaign would demonstrate the degree of public support through rallies and petitions. Alongside individuals, this approach would build specific coalitions within politically prominent groups to advocate for R&D, for instance ‘SMEs for research’ or ‘environmentalists for research’. This widespread, vocal display of support would, in turn, drive policy change.

This campaign would be co-ordinated by a central body or organisation, with professional organisers building grassroots support both in-person and virtually. Once advocates are mobilised, online toolkits would enable them to create and share their own content under a unified brand.



### Audience

This grassroots campaign would engage the public to drive support and then use this as a tool to influence decision-makers. Primary targets are:

- Young, urban graduates. Our segmentation analysis identified this demographic as more likely to already support research spending, and hence, more likely to be willing to persuade others.

- Encouraging individuals and organisations from specific sectors to form coalitions, such as ‘entrepreneurs for research’ or ‘patients for research’, to make the case for why research funding matters to them or their business.

These groups would be used to demonstrate the level of support for R&D funding to the public at large and to politicians directly. It would help tackle the notion that R&D funding is an elite exercise, removed from most people’s lives. From a political perspective it would highlight a large constituency of people who are motivated by research, reinforcing the electoral benefit to increasing R&D, and the potential threat of not meeting the 2.4% target.



### Message

The messaging of this campaign would be two-fold. Firstly, there would be tailored messaging to recruit activists and advocates from different groups – explaining the importance of them making their voice heard, and convincing others of the benefits of R&D. Those in organisations and groups needed to form ‘coalitions for research’ could be recruited by highlighting the business case for supporting R&D for their own priorities. In both cases, it would be important to stress that the time commitment involved would be flexible.

Secondly, these groups would then deliver a message to other members of the public that is emotive, positive, and centred around the benefits of R&D, and the need to fund it further (i.e. “We have X thanks to R&D”; “20 years of R&D led to X, another 20 years could lead to Y”).

Our public opinion research shows that while positive messages are good for garnering support, negative messages are better at raising awareness and getting people’s attention. Therefore, we would recommend encouraging the activists to compliment the positive messages with others that set out the dangers of not investing in research.



### Messengers

The primary messengers are people and organisations who are mobilised to share personal stories about how R&D has affected their lives. For example, individuals or a coalition of ‘patients for research’ could be encouraged to share how they, or loved ones, have been helped by new medicines, or how their job was created or improved because of R&D. Such individuals are likely to be naturally more engaged by research, and motivated to go out and make the case

for R&D. Training and support would focus on upskilling this group to recruit and mobilise others in their local community, in contrast to the training for beneficiary advocates highlighted in model one which would focus on communication rather than activism training. By using 'ordinary' people as messengers, the campaign will be more credible than if it were driven by the R&D community itself. Further, if the coalitions advocating for research funding include politically salient groups such as patients or SMEs, it is more likely to drive decision-makers to support R&D funding.

Alongside grassroots activists, this campaign model lends itself to using high-profile advocates such as celebrities and other public figures, particularly if they have benefitted or would benefit from a particular area of research. This may help broaden the public's understanding of R&D activity – perhaps using popular historians or businesspeople to talk about the benefits of R&D beyond the 'hard' sciences. There are caveats when using celebrities – we know from the public opinion research that any chosen celebrity must be relevant, knowledgeable, and trustworthy. If they lack any of these qualities, they could undermine the campaign.



## Medium

### *Online media*

This campaign would focus mostly on spreading its message through online media. Social media could quickly disseminate the campaign's message, target new audiences, and encourage the spread of user-created content. Our public opinion research shows that social media is where most of this campaign's target audience – young people – gets their news. Learning from the *Clicktivism* model of campaigning, online media would be a good way to secure signatures for petitions supporting the 2.4% target and demonstrate the strength of numbers behind research spending. In turn, generating these numbers makes it easier to secure traditional media coverage for the campaign and to influence policy makers.

### *Rallies*

This campaign would also use rallies to demonstrate the extent of public support. While demonstrations can be powerful tools, they must be deployed carefully. This campaign would use peaceful, non-disruptive rallies rather than direct-action campaign tactics, such as those used by Extinction Rebellion. Our public opinion research shows that the public tend to dislike campaigns that use these tactics, and building widespread public support is a key aim of this

campaign. Therefore, any public activism would be better pitched as celebratory rather than ‘rabble rousing’.

### *Open letters*

An activist campaign need not ignore more traditional methods of getting their voice heard. Learning from the This Affects You types of campaigns, we envision this model mobilising groups in favour of research to write open letters to parliamentarians and the press highlighting their support for spending. For instance, a letter signed by 300 SMEs or 1,000 nurses is a powerful mobiliser, particularly in the run up to events such as the Budget.



### **Timing**

It takes time to recruit an activist base, so efforts to locate supporters and build mailing lists should start immediately and experts in community organising should be put in place as soon as possible. This will provide the base of supporters who can be activated when the campaign is ready to launch.

This approach would be most impactful when used strategically in accordance with relevant days (national science week) or events (the Budget debates).



### **Pros**

- This campaign could help redefine the public image of the R&D community as exciting and edgy, breaking away from a traditional view of it being part of the establishment. This will help to engage younger demographics to care about R&D in the same way they care about other causes, such as environmentalism and overseas development, and demonstrate how these types of causes interrelate.
- This campaign would be more effective at raising public awareness of R&D than the other approaches. It is the most public-facing and would involve the public telling their own story about why research matters. People are much more likely to listen to a former cancer patient in their family or local business owner when it comes to the benefits of R&D, compared to a talking head on TV.
- By mobilising large numbers of supporters, this campaign would generate the most media engagement out of all

the advocacy approaches, which would help spread the campaign's message widely.

- This approach would apply the most pressure on decision-makers from the public, demonstrating both the breadth of support for R&D and the strength of that support within key groups – these are effective tools for driving policy change.



### Cons

- This approach is far from the R&D community's typical approach to advocacy. Some members of the community may be uncomfortable engaging in this type of campaign, or question why it is necessary given the political consensus on the 2.4% R&D commitment
- It may be difficult to motivate and mobilise a significant proportion of the population because research is not a topic that many people feel passionately about. If the campaign fails to secure sufficient numbers it could have a detrimental impact by revealing low levels of public support for the issue, giving Government good reason to dismiss it.
- This approach might also struggle to garner significant public support if people view research and innovation as a disruptive threat to their jobs or lives. For example, machines replacing human cashiers, or self-driving cars replacing taxis.
- One of the groups most easily mobilised by this campaign – young urban graduates – are typically the same voices who were unsuccessful in making themselves heard over the campaign for a second Brexit referendum, and are not seen as target voters for the current UK Government. As such, their voice and views may not have a large enough impact on the political debate.
- Finally, as some of our interviewees in the R&D community highlighted, engaging, cultivating and maintaining activists and coalitions is highly resource intensive and requires significant commitment in terms of staff time.



## Advocacy Approach 4

# Devolved campaigning

### Summary

This model is based on the following two assumptions:

- 1) Individual institutions are the best advocates for their own work.
- 2) The most effective route to securing R&D investment is to support these institutions to tell their story to both the public and politicians in the most coordinated, effective way.

This campaign would have a central theme, but its primary focus would be to help magnify the different voices of the sector and to support them in making their own case. A central body would provide training and templates for individual institutions to carry out their own advocacy activity. It would also help to co-ordinate messages from across the sector by providing a framework that individual institutions could build their own messages around.



### Audience

Each institution would continue to identify their own audiences and use their existing networks to reach them. However, the campaign itself would provide support and resources to enable individual institutions and sectors to expand and reach new audiences. This could involve:

- Providing support for R&D-intensive industries to communicate their work to the local community in which they are based;
- Supporting research institutions to organise visits from MPs and other decision-makers in order to showcase their work;
- Providing media training and support to researchers wanting to showcase the impact of their R&D activity.

The emphasis would be on helping research institutions spread their message themselves in the most effective and coordinated way, by providing the necessary tools and framework.



## Messengers

Each individual institution would determine the appropriate messengers to deliver their specific message. The central campaign would provide advice and support for these messengers to ensure their voices secure cut through with both the public and decision-makers.

The central campaign would use its convening power to bring together different elements of the research community and showcase a diverse range of work. This could occur through an annual UK R&D conference, or during national science week, to showcase the full breadth and depth of R&D activity.



## Message

Coordination could be achieved through an overarching message theme, which each institution could adapt to showcase what they do. For example, 'This is R&D' could be an overarching message which showcases the diversity of R&D. But the exact tone and how those messages are pitched would be decided by individual organisations.

However, rather than an 'everyone for themselves' approach, the central body would be responsible for creating cross-cutting messages and encouraging institutions to make the case for other members of the community – for instance, universities to advocate for the benefits of tax credits to businesses.

The central campaign would take responsibility for showcasing the work of individual institutions and aggregating their individual activities to produce a compelling case for R&D investment overall. It might produce guides for the public and decision-makers which map R&D activity across the UK, or create a directory of places to visit.

Essentially, the central campaign's overarching role for messaging would be to make the community's advocacy efforts more than the sum of its parts.



## Medium

The campaign would promote the community's work largely through social media. This would help to spread the messages of individual institutions to a larger audience. There would also be a central website collating all of the community's messages in one place.

The campaign could also work with individual institutions to identify

opportunities for them to promote their work in a format they may be less familiar with, such as broadcast or print.

This campaign's key function would be to build relationships across individual institutions in the R&D community, and provide meaningful support for them to communicate their work. Some of the participants in the R&D interviews described it as a 'hub and spoke' model, where the central campaign feeds information to the constituent parts and showcases their work to magnify it to a larger audience.



### Pros

- The devolved campaigning approach offers flexibility, making it easier to get buy-in from many different parts of the R&D community. It would allow individual elements of the community to tailor the message to what is most relevant to them.
- This campaign would only require a small central coordinating body, as most of the work would be done by individual institutions. Therefore, it would incur low start-up and maintenance costs.
- A devolved approach would also more effectively reflect the diversity of the sector, as it would amplify the voices of different segments of the community. A devolved approach would also avoid any central campaign becoming dominated by a particular aspect of R&D, instead giving constituent parts of the community the opportunity to make their own case.



### Cons

- This campaign approach may lack coordination given the large number of distinct institutions in the R&D sector. This lack of coordination could make the campaign ineffective – without a centralised, cohesive framework the campaign message will be diluted or even undermined by conflicting messages from different institutions
- Coordinating and compiling different messages across institutions may prove difficult and resource intensive. Further, there is a risk of the campaign lacking an overarching theme or cohesiveness, which could limit organisations' participation and enthusiasm.
- Without a strong overarching central campaign body, this campaign is likely to lose the benefits of scale. It would be difficult, for instance, for individual institutions themselves to reach large segments of the public – particularly people who are traditionally less engaged – or have the same impact on decision makers as a fully united approach.

# Recommendations for the R&D community

These models are illustrative and before initiating any campaign we would recommend a round of message testing and baselining to understand precisely where the public, and politically important groups such as SMEs, stand on R&D. Our public opinion research provides some indication, but any campaign would want to build on this, testing how different messages, messengers, and mediums across the four approaches we have proposed would land.



None of the models are mutually exclusive and, in a decade-long campaign, we would recommend deploying all four at different times for maximum impact. Specifically:

- An R&D think tank combined with elite lobbying will build on the sector's strong relationship with decision-makers and could prove useful prior to Budget debates and Spending Reviews; speaking with one voice through a central campaign will make those lobbying efforts even more effective.
- Building a base of research activists and coalitions will help to showcase the depth of support for R&D within key constituencies, and help the R&D narrative spread more organically. It will also ensure that should the 2.4% target ever come under threat, there is a support base ready to go out and make the case on behalf of the R&D community.
- Empowering individual institutions to best tell their own story through devolved campaigning makes for a powerful advocacy model that showcases the diversity of the sector and allows for more local, tailored engagement.

**“Of the four advocacy models we have proposed, we believe the first is the most important.”**

That said, of the four advocacy models we have proposed, we believe the first is the most important. Engaging the public

to ensure political support has never been more important, and the way to ensure durable support for R&D spending is to persuade the

public of its worth. The best way to build resilient support for R&D spending is by making R&D tangible, showing how it will solve both everyday problems and the big challenges of our time, and nurturing a new generation of R&D advocates to deliver that message.

With regards to the campaign typologies discussed in Chapter 3 – we recommend an overall campaign strategy that combines the approaches *The Strength of Our Argument* and *This Affects You*. In the past, the R&D community has often deployed *The Strength of Our Argument* campaigns, using logical arguments and experts to convey fact-based messages directed at decision-makers. We would encourage any future campaign to build on this, by engaging the general public in a way that is accessible and avoids appearing either overly technical or condescending.

The R&D community could benefit from expanding its messaging to include more emotive tones and reach the public with tangible examples. We believe the *This Affects You* approach of showing people how R&D affects them and mobilising them as supporters would complement the traditional *The Strength of Our Argument* approach. Of course, regardless of which typologies are used or when campaign approaches are mobilised, it is important to have the eight key tools for a successful campaign outlined in Chapter 2 as the basis of any future campaign.

All the campaigns we have set out will involve the community being willing to experiment with different modes of advocacy to identify what works. This is not to dismiss the excellent work going on within the sector, but an acknowledgment that securing greater support

**“The community must be willing to experiment with different modes of advocacy.”**

will require the R&D community to move out of its comfort zone – deploying messages and forms of

engagement, particularly in more values-based debates that it may have traditionally shied away from. Undertaking this transformation, and reaping its benefits, will first require jointly resolving the tensions and questions highlighted in Chapter 4.

The case for R&D spending has a strong baseline, one which many campaigns would envy. The next challenge will be to amplify and build on this good work to secure investment in R&D for the long term.

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