

How to organize a rally!

Rallies can be exciting and fun while bringing a large number of people together for a cause. There is comfort in being with many others who support the same cause and want to see change. Flyers, signs and speakers also enforce and raise awareness for the cause the rally is promoting in a very noticeable way. A well organized rally, if done properly, will send a clear message to the community, businesses, and politicians.

Planning

Regardless of the size of the rally, a lot of time and effort goes into organizing. Give yourself no less than two weeks to organize. I try to plan rallies at least one month from when I want them to happen.

Pick a day

Pick a day that doesn't have any (or many) conflicting events. It should be a day when most people who would want to attend can come. Try to avoid days where there are sports games, musical concerts, or tournaments.

Book a venue

Regardless if the rally is held in an indoor or outdoor space, plan on defining an area for your rally that accommodates less people than you think may participate, so that the space looks full no matter how many people attend. It may be best if the space has no permanent fixtures so that you can set it up as desired.

Make sure there aren't conflicting events taking place at your desired location.

Inform the police about the event and check to see if you need any permits or just to let them know what's going on. When informing police about events, you'll be letting them know about the demographics of the crowd. There are usually a lot of seniors at health rallies, so be sure to tell them. Also, be sure to tell them that it will be peaceful and you won't be blocking traffic!

Get people to your Event!

There are a lot of different ways to get the word out about your rally. First and foremost, please contact the Friends of Medicare Campaigner if you are planning a rally in your town. That way, she can get the message out through the Friends of Medicare website and membership lists.

It is important to get the word out in a variety of ways:

-Make a handout and poster (both should look the same for continuity) with the relevant information. Brainstorm with your team to come up with slogans for the paraphernalia. Post flyers around the neighborhood, at community centers, on school and church bulletin boards. Everywhere!

-If you can have them printed, and send digital copies by email to memberships lists, and invite everyone to send them to their contact lists.

-Depending on funding perhaps you could purchase ads in print and on the radio, but try to find the free way of doing it first.

-The internet represents an essentially cost-free resource to educate people about the cause and create buzz about your event. Create a "group" email list that includes your official and community group contacts (including potential speakers), plus appropriate friends, family members and co-workers. Distribute strategic updates about your event to this group, and encourage them to forward your emails to people they know who'd want to attend.

-Social Media is big right now. This includes making Facebook Event notices, Twitter feeds, youtube videos or post something in your blog.

-As much as I can, I try to personally call through membership lists to let people know about, and remind them of the rally. For you, that could be your church group, classmates, slow-pitch team, or other sorts of groups you are involved with.

What your rally could look like

Even if the rally is very short and to the point, make sure you contact your local paper and radio media with a brief press notice about one week before you plan on having the rally.

Plan your rally to take less than an hour. Any more and people get too fidgety.

Make sure there is a schedule of events which includes who speaks in which order, and for how long.

When inviting people to speak at the rally: Make sure you plan your list ahead of time so that people aren't coming up to you to ask to speak during the rally. People on your list should only speak for a max of 3 minutes.

Your speakers might be well-known community members. You might choose to make it a panel of inspiring, well-rounded experts. Your speakers should have wide-ranging insights, stories and perspectives. It can be good to mix up your speeches with music. If you are planning on having a very large crowd, outside, with speakers, or music, you

should think about getting a simple but effective sound system. Megaphones aren't very clear for people to hear at the back.

Your Rally might not even need speakers. It might be very short, and might have only one person leading the direction of chants and group songs. If this is the case, you probably won't need a sound system, a megaphone could do.

Remind people to bring sings, placards and noise makers!

Be prepared to clean up after the event. And you are done!