


# Together We Can Change The World: Rai Waddingham



**Together We Can Change The World** ↗

What can we learn from Human Rights activism & campaigns

## What is an effective campaign? Is it ..



- How slick, glossy or well constructed our campaign materials are?
- The catchiness of our key message?
- How many 'likes' we get on Facebook?
- How many people take part in the protest?
- **No.** If we want to change a real change, we can only judge the effectiveness of our campaign by how close it brings us to our goal.
- **Actions speak louder than words**



Voice hearers, family members, academics, professionals, citizens

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[www.intervoiceonline.org](http://www.intervoiceonline.org)

**Together we can change the world**

When it doesn't work so well ....

Examples from campaigns that sounded (or looked) great, but didn't get anywhere near the change they'd hoped for

## Ineffective Campaigns Might ...

- Favour style over substance
- Have a confused, or confusing, message.
- Sound great, but leave the public unsure about what they need to do about it.
- Exclude the public (e.g. feel like 'niche' issues that people don't relate to, or attached to a particular political or religious group)
- Leave the public feeling guilty or bad, with no way to alleviate these feelings through positive action.
- Be a 'flash in the pan' – real change takes time.
- Be badly organised or implemented



**Learning From What Worked** ↗


The fight against 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' in the US

## A Bit of Background

- 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue', introduced in 1994, in the context of Clinton's promise to allow all citizens to serve in the military regardless of their sexual orientation.
- BUT, in light of the accepted high level of homophobia and prejudice, a compromise was reached:
  - Don't Ask (about someone's sexual orientation)
  - Don't Tell (otherwise you'll be discharged)
  - Don't Pursue (or investigate without 'credible information')
- The rationale for this was that the presence of openly gay people 'would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability'.

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## Don't Persue ... Unless ...



- This excerpt from a training manual explains the army's understanding of 'credible' information under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'
- It amounts to a 'reliable' person making an official statement that they heard or saw someone speaking about, writing about their intention to 'engage in a homosexual act'

## Legal Challenges

- Successful legal challenges initially challenged process and procedures of individual dismissals, not the law itself:
  - McVeigh successfully challenged a 'search and destroy' mission where the US Navy illegally violated his personal AOL email account as part of their investigation
  - Others focused on challenging whether the legal conditions that must be met to intrude upon people's private lives have been met.
- This laid the groundwork the Log Cabin Republicans to file a lawsuit that showed DADT to be unconstitutional – violating rights to free speech, due process and open association.

## Challenging the evidence driving DADT

**American Psychological Association (2004)**

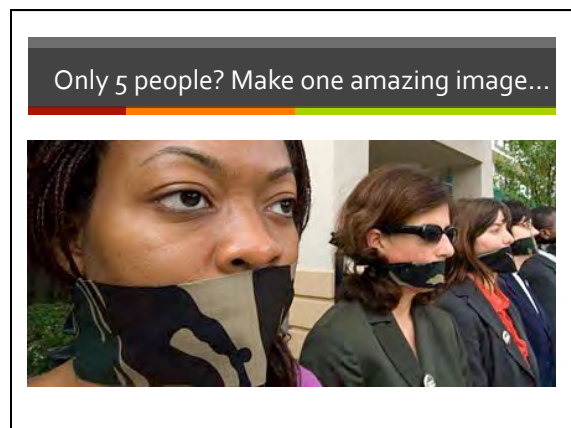
- Issued a statement that DADT 'discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation' and says that there is no evidence that having openly gay, lesbian or bisexual people in the military will adversely affect morale or safety.

**Zogby International Poll (2007)**

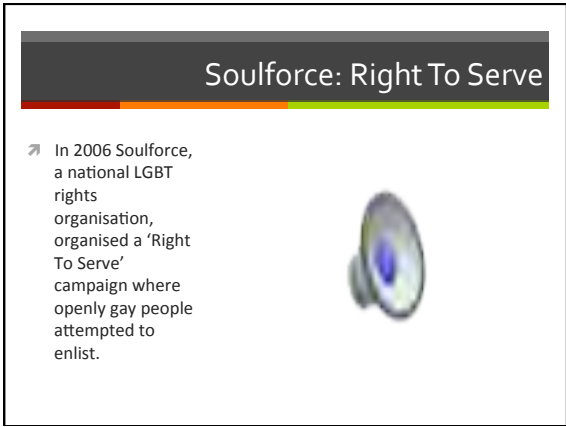
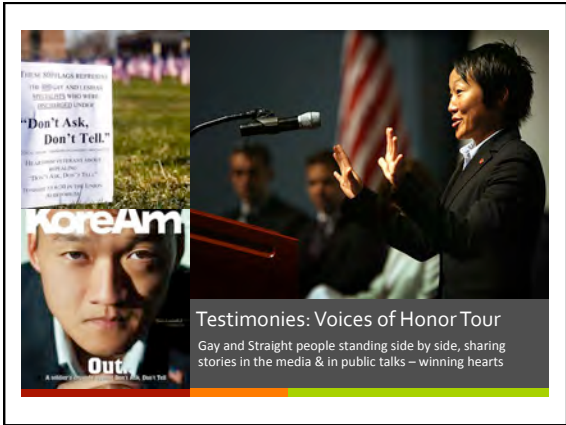
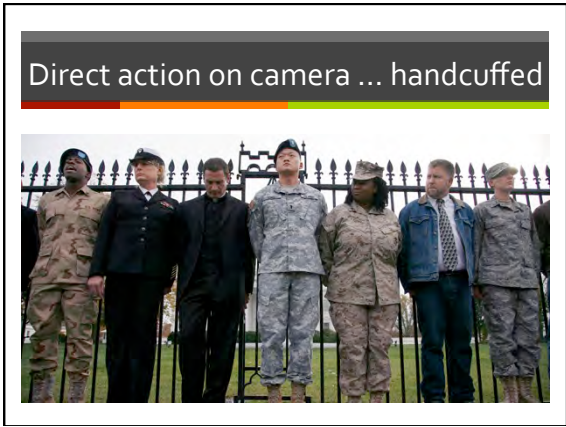
- This poll showed that only 37% of military personnel opposed openly gay people serving in the forces, and only 27% felt it would have a negative impact on morale.
- These findings led a key respected military figure (former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff) to publicly oppose the DADT policy.



**Eye-catching imagery**  
Using powerful images that evoke emotion and are linked to American ideals or sense of pride



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## We're Stronger Together

- As efforts gained momentum, organisations and campaigns began to collaborate for change.
- Voices of Honor – Human Rights Campaign & Servicemembers United.
- Voices of Honor tour used testimonies and the Right To Service film 'Ask Not' as a focus for grassroots activism (house meetings & film screenings).
- Don't Ask Don't Tell Flash Protest at the Whitehouse – No H8 Campaign, Students for the National Equality March & Service Members Legal Defense Network.




## A partner – No H8

- Originally No H8 was a silent photographic protest created by celebrity photographer Adam Bouska.
- 5 years later it now has almost 33,000 faces and has grown to symbolise standing against discrimination and bullying in all forms.




## You Tube can be a friend

No H8 release a range of video shorts to engage people




## No H8, National Equality March & co at The Don't Ask Don't Tell Flash Protest

- A flash protest that used a text service and social media to gather 1,200 people outside the Whitehouse
- Many were students in Washington for the National Equality March



## Desperation = pushing back

- As the campaigns gathered momentum, they also gathered strong and vicious opposition.
- Counter arguments centred on
  - Homosexuality as immoral
  - If it aint broke, don't fix it
  - Fear mongering, linking the DADT movement with prominent controversies around 'restroom arrests'
- An illegitimate 1000 strong letter supporting DADT was published.




## An example of fear mongering ..

- "the liberalisation of DADT would compromise restroom integrity and security ... the national shudder and discomfort and queasiness associated with any introduction of homosexual eroticism into the public men's rooms should make us more determined than ever to resist the injection of those lurid attitudes to even more explosive situation of the U.S.military"

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## A political NOT a military issue



- Whilst initially most politicians were silent, deferring to the military expertise, public pressure helped to place this back in the hands of the politicians and, therefore, the people.
- Obama set a timetable to repeal the law, but campaigning organisations pushed politicians to move it forward. Progress was painfully slow.



## 17 years and multiple angles ..

Legal Challenges	Media Savvy	Public Engagement	Collaboration	Politics
Focus on procedural issues	Use of media friendly images, slogans, issues, protests	Widen relevance	Different campaigns join forces	Using social pressure to demand change
'Expert' bodies critique the law		Stimulate debate		
		Win hearts	Finding a strong allied context	Making it a political issue
		Grassroots Activism		

## But finally - success

## In groups, choose an aim to work with

- Change the way the public view people who hear voices - hearing voices is a common human experience
- Stop forced medication
- Stop Community Treatment Orders
- Embed **true** informed choice in mental health support
- Recognition that mental health is a social issue not a medical one!
- Show that the 'chemical imbalance' theory is a fallacy
- Get a public health approach to violence & abuse
- Acknowledge psychosis as a sane reaction to insane circumstances
- Show that fighting for the rights of those deemed mentally ill is the last great civil rights movement

## A) Find a clear key message

- In groups, come up with a list of some potential key messages, phrase or slogan that you think could clearly communicate with the general public to achieve your aim.
- **As a group – choose one that you would like to work with for the rest of the exercise**

## B) Methods

- In the campaign against 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' people used a range of methods to convey their message.
- Without censoring yourselves, try and get a list of as many different methods that you could use to communicate your message.
- **As a group – choose one that you would like to work with for the rest of the exercise. This might be something you haven't done before ... something that you'd like to think more about.**

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### C) Your campaign ...

- In groups, explore one of your methods in more detail.
- You might want to think about:
  - How might it work?
  - What would you need to do?
  - Who would you need to involve?
  - What resources might you need?
  - How would you get the word out?
  - How would you know it was successful?
- We'll keep a record of everyone's ideas for the event report

### Thank you!



- These are just a few ideas. Let's keep working together to help create real change.
- Remember to sign up to our Time for (real) change discussion list.
- No single person or organisation can change the world, after all.