

Beating Goliath: A resource for corporate campaigners

by the democracy center
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Published in October 2011, *Beating Goliath*™ gathers case studies from previous successful campaigns against corporations, looking at how they won and what we can learn from them. It provides links to many useful resources for activists, and highlights current campaigns engaged in the fight against climate change through targeting corporations.

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From the introduction

All across the world people are engaged in urgent battles: on worker rights, protection of the environment, trade, health, and a range of other issues that shape our lives and our futures. In many of these struggles we face a powerful adversary – the corporation. National laws and international trade agreements are drafted under the influence of corporate power. Corporate interests form the donor base of major political parties, and often have bigger balance sheets than the countries they operate in. Waves of deregulation and privatization have eroded limits to corporate accumulation of profit and power. In this hostile environment, groups have had to become more and more sophisticated in how they confront companies in their workplaces and communities.

Struggles to win concessions from corporate power are not new. As the influence and reach of the corporation has grown, so has resistance to it. From early worker struggles for better wages and conditions, to the late 1990s campaign that targeted Shell’s bright yellow logo to stop it sinking an old drilling platform in the North Sea, confronting corporate interests has long been part of the struggle for social and environmental justice.

Groups confronting corporations have a range of politics and use a range of tactics. They include Christian shareholder groups that talk about increasing “corporate responsibility”, direct action campaigners that see capitalism itself as the root cause of climate change, well-funded NGOs and confederations of neighbourhood organizations. The Democracy Center designed this resource to be useful for both newcomers to this kind of campaigning and old hands, no matter where they lie on the political or tactical spectrum.

This resource opens with some background on corporate campaigning, and why we think it’s important to take on corporate power through individual campaigns. We then look at a series of wins from corporate targets, with a focus on what we can learn from them as we put together new campaigns.

This is followed by introductions to tools and more detailed resources for campaigners fighting corporations – including organizing, research, strategy, communications, coalition building, direct action, shareholder and financier strategies, legal strategies, and consumer strategies.

Finally, we’ve included six profiles of climate justice campaigns against corporations that are happening right now, with brief outlines of what they’re campaigning for and how they’re going about it.

Beating Goliath is available as a free download here.

If you would like to order print copies of “Beating Goliath”™ email contact@democracyctr.org.

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