

# ACTIONS ARE PERFORMANCES: CAST YOUR CHARACTERS

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Not just artistic activism, but all parts of campaigning involve performance. Whether you're registering people to vote in front of a supermarket, phone banking, or doing something absolutely innovative, you're doing it for an audience, so thinking about it as a performance will help. Assigning members of your team roles to ensure engagement, creativity, and fun means that people are accountable to keeping those creative and performative elements alive and thriving through the whole creative process. Below we outline roles that we've found can help. Though the positions are written with street actions in mind, much of this can apply to all kinds of tactics and interventions.

The people in these positions should be in charge of nudging the group to answer the questions specific to their role. The questions will help your group make the action impactful, fun for your team, and highly interesting to your audience.

## Chief Action Director

- What does the action look, feel, sound like? If it were a movie, would it be a superhero flick, a romcom, a mystery?
- What happens at the beginning, middle, and end? What's the arc? Is there a big finale? If not, could there be?
- Is there a way for casual observers to understand what's happening? E.g., an omniscient narrator as an emcee, a sign that gives context?
- Do all of the players know their roles? Is there a kind of "stage" and everything happens there, or are there multiple areas of engagement with "actors" talking to people in different spots?
- What is the tempo and timeline of the piece? How does it move through space and time?

## Chief Emotions Officer

- How can our action do more to help move people emotionally?
- Do the emotions that our actions express reflect our values and what we want to see changed in the world? If our message is about hope, would a passerby intuitively grasp hope at first glance?
- How will our action capture attention and get people thinking and feeling differently?
- Could it be more surprising? Weird? Funny?



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## **Chief Interactions Executive**

- What are three main messages we want people to walk away with? Does our action make those messages clear to our audience?
- How can our action do more to engage people? Is there more we can give the audience to do?
- Does everyone know what to say, including people talking to our audience(s)? Do they feel confident with the range of things audiences might say to them?
- Does our audience have an action they can take that is connected to our objective? Are we creating conditions under which they would actually take that action?
- After they encounter our action, what will they tell their friends? Does it reflect the takeaway we are intending?

