

EXERCISE:

PUTTING THE “ACT” IN TACTIC

30 MIN

It never fails to amaze us **how much you can learn by taking a little time to act out an action idea**. Seeing an action staged, even in a very rough form, gives insights you can use to evaluate actions and know whether they need further tinkering or if they're ready to go forward and be put into action. This can be done in as little as half an hour, and we promise it requires no performance skills.

- **Narrow down your tactics** to the top two or three. Spend a few minutes discussing each one from the point of view of the audience.
 - How can people enter the action?
 - How can the action begin?
 - What's the middle section?
 - How can the action end?
 - How can people exit?
 - What materials will be on hand? What could be acquired and brought?
 - What could the audience do during the beginning, middle, and end? How can they engage and participate? What do they take away at the end?

Divide into groups and have each group take on one action. (If you have a smaller team, the whole group can do the below for each tactic idea.)

- **Visualize.** Take a few minutes (just 10-15) to make a sketch of how the action will unfold. Realize as much as you can in three dimensions, so you can present a more immersive experience. Assign clear roles to members of your group, giving them specific parts to play. Make rough props or costumes out of paper or cardboard, or just mime things — trust us that these placeholders can be enough to communicate the idea. If needed, you can have a narrator explain any details that may be difficult to convey through your sketch.
- **Assign audience personas.** Before you present, write descriptions on scraps of paper of people who might see the action when it is live. Place them all in a hat and ask the viewers to pick one piece of paper and try to experience the presentation through that person's eyes.

Your descriptions can be short: just a name and a few phrases to paint a picture. For example:

- Omar, on the way to work, skeptical of protests
- Ana and their five-year-old child, heard about it on social media
- Cecile who is ambivalent on the issue and on her way home after finishing a 9-hour shift



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(For more guidance on envisioning the people who might engage with your action, see “Step 2: Find Audiences” in our [toolkit](#) and the “[Secondary and Unintended Audiences](#)” explainer.)

- **Perform** each action, for just a few minutes.
- **Discuss.** Have each audience member share briefly about their observations from the perspective of the character they picked out of the hat. Then go around the room again, and have each person, including the performers, share:
 - What they thought worked about the action,
 - What they think could be changed, and
 - Potential additions and other ways to improve.
- **Compare and decide.** After all actions have been performed and discussed, choose a process to make a final decision. If you can’t decide, consider combining elements from different actions or doing small versions of each action for the public as prototypes. (More on prototypes in Step 5 of our [toolkit](#)!)

