



World Society for the Protection of Animals

Dolphin Protection Campaign
A Toolkit for Advocates

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Foreword by Richard O'Barry

When you first see a dolphin show, it looks like a lot of fun. The dolphins are always smiling, and they're also laughing in their own way -- and so are we. The audience is applauding as these marvelous creatures -- so intelligent, so bursting with energy -- do amazing tricks for us.

Could anything be better?

Well, yes. It could be better if it were true. The dolphin smiling and all of us laughing and having a rollicking good time, all this seems like it's really happening. But look again. It's actually show business. At first glance you think it's real and I don't blame you, because it's magic, theater magic.

For many years I worked the show-biz side of things. I helped capture dolphins for the Miami Seaquarium and trained them, putting on a great show of dolphins leaping and jumping through hoops on command and acting the clown in amusing skits. I even trained the most famous of all dolphins, Flipper, who starred in his own TV series and feature films during the 1960s, some of which are still being seen around the world. It was a great job and a daily challenge, staying ahead of the scriptwriters and the several dolphins that played the role of Flipper.

Only toward the end of my dolphin-training career did I admit to myself that there's something wrong about using dolphins for our amusement. They have wonderfully rich lives of their own till we yank them out of the sea, their lives as a species going back 60 million years. I worked for a time on the Miami Seaquarium Capture Boat and used to help abduct them, kicking and screaming. We brought them to shore and dumped them into an alien fantasy world -- and why? It was my job. If someone would pay me to do this, surely, I thought, it must be okay. I really thought what I was doing was acceptable. I even convinced myself that the dolphins we captured were lucky because they would be cared for by humans for the rest of their lives. And listen to the people laugh and clap their hands when the dolphins do flips in the air. Isn't that worth something?

I could have stayed in the business of capturing and training dolphins and could have made a lot of money doing it. But when the Flipper show ended and I suddenly had lots of time to think about my life so far, I was sick to my stomach. I was appalled and disgusted by what I had been doing. I was also determined to stop it.

Oh, it would be difficult, I knew. Perhaps impossible. If it had taken me years to see dolphins as they actually are and what we were doing to them, how could I expect the public to understand? I was being paid to think that it was okay, of course. On the other hand, I knew what dolphins in the wild were really like. Most people who go to dolphin

shows believe that it's great family entertainment. How could I get anyone to realize that this is just a lie, an elaborate ruse masking our ruthless exploitation of these magnificent creatures?

Like any other business, the dolphin captivity industry is based on supply and demand. As long as there are people willing to buy tickets to watch dolphins perform tricks, dolphins will be captured from the wild and trained to perform for huge paying audiences. Therefore, the key to putting a stop to the exploitation of dolphins is to reach the consumers. I am sure that if the public knew what really goes on behind the glittering scene of the captive dolphin spectacle, most would revolt against it. In other words, they wouldn't buy a ticket.

Getting worldwide public opinion on our side, getting people to see what we see at a dolphin show, that's our big goal. And we're making some progress overall, winning in some parts of the world; losing in others. If people understand our message, they'll join us. I'm sure of that. If they can realize that when we talk about "dolphin abuse," we don't necessarily mean that they're being kicked or neglected. Being in captivity itself is abusive. For a wild dolphin swimming free, being captured and plunged into a tank that's like a teacup, how could that not be abusive?

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. First Steps
- III. Getting Together
 - For Established Organizations
 - Forming Your Own Advocacy Group
 - As an Individual
- IV. Getting Organized
- V. Meeting Your Opponent
 - Going in with the Right Attitude
 - Working on the Problem Together
 - If Negotiations Don't Succeed
- VI. Dolphin Facts
 - Knowing the Basics
 - What's Wrong with Keeping Dolphins in Captivity?
 - Red Flag Behaviors
 - Avoiding Common Pitfalls
 - Handling Delicate Questions
- VII. Communications: Messaging and Interviewing
 - What is "Messaging?"
 - Your Core Messages
 - Speaking with the Media
 - Interview Prep: The Basics
- VIII. Appendices
 - A. Support Materials
 - Press/Information Kits
 - Other Useful Tools
 - B. Research and Resources
 - C. Tips for Effective Letter Writing
 - D. Legal Questions

I: Introduction

Something is bothering you in your community. Maybe you've heard talk of plans to open a dolphin swim program. Maybe your local aquarium has had one too many dolphins die in its care. Maybe a theme park has applied for permits to capture or import some marine mammals for their facility.

You know you want to do something but aren't sure where to start.

The realities: Owners of dolphin shows and the people who work there have an advantage. For openers, many people like the shows. They're amused by the silly dolphin antics. Or they love the spectacles of animal domination, and the more amazing the animal, the more they love it.

In addition, the captivity industry is well financed. As part of the establishment, they make money and pay taxes. They're good citizens. They advertise, they support the chamber of commerce, and as far as government is concerned, dolphin shows are just another business.

But there is a terrible, ugly, heartbreaking side to this business and this is a key to your success.

This toolkit is meant to give you ideas and share some lessons WSPA has learned. Be aware that there is no specific blueprint for success. Every situation is different. What might work in one instance may be completely ineffective in another. The important things are to plan, be creative and be patient. And above all else, don't give up, because that's exactly what your opponents want – and expect – you to do. These fights aren't easy and they aren't quick. But you can win.

II: FIRST STEPS

It's tempting, when faced with an animal welfare issue, to run right out and start protesting or threatening boycotts. Anything to call attention to your issue. You're impatient to go fix the problem. And in some cases – such as if a dolphin capture is imminent or the comment period on a new facility is closing within days – you may need to act very quickly. But this is also the moment when you need to breathe, think and PLAN.

Aside from reacting to the immediate situation, this is the time to ask yourself what you want to see happen. Who do you need to influence? Who can help you with your problem? What kind of information do you need to support your case? In other words, this is the time to *strategize*. Sure, we don't have the luxury to lie out our every move and be completely prepared before a crisis arises. But if you remain aware of the need to be strategic and lay the foundations of your campaign, you'll be that much more likely to steer your way through the chaos and reach your ultimate goal.

The first 3 questions you must answer:

What is the exact nature of the problem?

This sounds like a simple premise, but it can be deceptively complex. And the answer to this question will set the tone for all of your activities from this point forward. Have any laws been broken? Is this a welfare issue? We all know that keeping wild animals in captivity is wrong, but what is it about this particular situation that has caused you to take action? (*For more information, see Section VI, "Dolphin Facts"*)

Every situation is unique, but as an example, here are some typical issues that WSPA has encountered:

- Unknown or unreported illnesses are killing captive marine mammals. The park prefers to cover up or deny the situation and instead “replaces” the dead dolphins with new ones, hoping that the public won't know the difference. Disclosures are not made as to the causes of death.
- Dolphins are to be captured for new or existing facilities.
- Dolphins are being held in an area where no regulations exist for their care. Their welfare is currently compromised or may soon be compromised.
- Questions exist as to the legality of a dolphin transport or capture.
- Dolphins are being kept in poor conditions and are not receiving even the most basic care. Things to look for:
 - Polluted water
 - Noise pollution in terms of air or water craft; near a highway
 - Run-off from factories, highways, parking lots.
 - Cloudy or debris-filled water due to heavy rains.

- Lack of water replacement (i.e., stagnant water)
- Lack of salt/too salty. (If the water does not accurately simulate a dolphin's natural environment, this can damage their skin and eyes.)
- Shallow enclosure (This prevents the dolphins from diving to cool themselves and escape the sun on their sensitive skin.)
- Small pen.
- Lack of nourishment (fresh fish, vitamins)
- Depriving the animals of food (This method is often used in training)
- No veterinary care by marine mammal experts
- A proposal has been submitted to open some type of dolphin program.
- Dolphins are being exhibited without proper permits or in violation of the permits they do hold.
- The animals in encounter programs are being overworked and constantly subjected to aggressive tourists.
- "Wild" dolphins that have been habituated to humans are being lured into contact with swimmers and divers by those who stand to profit from this interaction, posing a great threat to both the people and the dolphins.

What do you want to see happen?

In many – perhaps most – cases, it will not be probable to return dolphins to the ocean. But you can be successful in closing a show so that it can no longer exploit or capture dolphins for profit. You may succeed in convincing corporations not to sponsor captive dolphin shows. You can provide some relief for dolphins by ensuring that they get the care that they need. Or, you can educate people about being more compassionate consumers. Be specific and realistic about what you want to achieve and what the best possible solution is, given the circumstances.

It's important to remember that realizing your final goal may take time and that there will be many interim steps along the way. Be willing to work out a timetable with your opponents. Also, recognize the value of smaller victories. You may not get everything you want the first time around, but every concession takes you one step closer to your ultimate goal.

Who is responsible for this situation?

Identify all of the persons or entities in a position to affect change. First, determine those persons and groups that are directly connected to the problem or have the authority to fix it, including the owners of a captive dolphin facility or government officials. Also identify those people/groups who don't have direct control but who still have influence, such as corporate sponsors, widespread public opinion and the media. Being able to leverage one group against another can be a very powerful tool in your arsenal (i.e., one governmental department may be more receptive to your concerns than another and can open doors and use its influence in your favor).

III: GETTING TOGETHER

Chances are if you're concerned about an issue, there are others who feel the same way.

As Part of an Established Organization

- Find other individuals or organizations that are already working on this or are also interested.
- Consider forming a coalition around this issue.
 - Try to mobilize groups other than animal protection organizations. Whale and dolphin watching businesses and dive associations are often opposed to captive dolphin programs because they affect the wild populations and, hence, these groups' businesses.
 - You will find that there is a growing number of eco-tourism companies and societies that might not know about your issue but that would get behind you, even if it's only in the form of a policy statement or letter of support for your position.
 - Business and civic associations may support you if part of your platform is that a proposed dolphin facility will edge out local small business enterprises.
 - Environmental groups can be a useful resource. Many emerging dolphin programs are located in coastal zones. While these groups may not have an active anti-captivity agenda, they may partner with you in a joint effort to protect marine resources. College campuses often have very active chapters of environmental organizations.
 - Religious affiliations may support you as a matter of principle and compassion for fellow creatures. This can be a powerful tool if you live in an area where the religious community has a lot of prestige.
- Weigh your skills: Consider what you can contribute to the effort.
 - Are you a research organization?
 - Do you have a lot of active volunteers?
 - Does your staff consist of marine mammal experts?
 - Are you particularly committed to this issue?
 - Do you have good contacts with the media?
 - Are you an accomplished public speaker?
 - Do you have a graphic designer who can create web sites and informational materials?
- Determine your resources to spend on this in terms of time, manpower and budget.

Forming Your Own Advocacy Group

You don't have to be part of a large, well-funded animal welfare organization to make a difference. In fact, some of the most successful campaigns have been waged by small bands of compassionate people who were fed up and determined enough to get together and make some noise. Here are some things to consider:

- Define your mission
Will you form around only this specific issue or will you address others as well?
- Recruit additional members
 - Post flyers at vet offices and pet supply stores
 - Place an ad in local newspapers
 - Hang notices at grocery stores, coffee shops, dog parks, etc. in your neighborhood
 - Word of mouth – Ask friends, family, co-workers to join you and encourage them to recruit even more members
 - When you attract supporters, get their names, addresses, phone numbers and other information, such as when they are free to help and what their skills are.
- Create a mailing list and phone tree of supporters and potential supporters.
When you have information to report (an upcoming meeting; some good news to share), contact everyone on your mailing list by phone. The personal touch will make people feel like valuable members of your effort. Base your activities on the number of volunteers you have and the amount of work that this group can reasonably achieve.
- Choose a name
Having a name – whether your group consists of just you and a friend or two hundred people – will make you seem more organized and “official.”
- If feasible, create a logo, letterhead and web site for your group.
- Identify other local, national and international groups who might collaborate with you or provide information and resources.
- Financial support
If just getting started with some friends and neighbors, you may decide to work informally and each contribute personally what you can to finance your activities. This isn't a problem at all as long as you don't spend beyond your means or spend money that you don't have in hand. And if this is how you decide to operate, it's very important to plan ahead of time what your activities will be and how much each will cost. Be realistic about what you can afford with your budget and consider doing more small-scale, less expensive activities instead of blowing all of your money on one thing.

Many groups decide to charge for memberships, even if it's only a nominal sum. If someone is willing to contribute financially to your efforts, this may signal that extra amount of commitment to the issue and help you to develop a group that you can count on. Why don't you appoint a committee to consider this and all the other little problems? The more people work, the more they belong. And the more they belong, the more clout you will have in dealing with public officials.

Keep in mind that if you want to become a formal organization and conduct fundraising activities, you may be subject to local, state and national laws in this regard. Be sure to consult an attorney. You don't want to discredit your cause by inadvertently doing anything illegal.

- Getting your name out there
When working for any cause, you'll discover that you need to communicate with some government agencies, as well as people in the media, law enforcement officials and civic organizations. You'll need to write to these people from time to time (*See Section VIII, Appendix C: "Tips for Effective Letter Writing"*), they'll get to know your name, you'll make appointments to talk to them at their office and later, perhaps, you'll get to know them well enough so that you can just drop by if you have a special problem. You may get lucky; some of these people may be closet animal welfare supporters.

And don't forget civic clubs. If you like to speak publicly, every civic club in the world is looking for someone interesting to talk to them. If you do a good job at your first one, they'll all want you. This is an excellent way to recruit more members.

As an Individual

The old adage that one person really can make a difference is absolutely true. Here are some ideas for getting involved:

- Consider assisting in the efforts of local organizations.
- If you hear of a planned dolphin capture, alert the media or, if possible, videotape it yourself and then hand the footage over to the media. The last thing the captivity industry wants is for the public to see images of the violent process of capturing a dolphin.
- Contact your governmental representatives. Ask them to implement greater protection for marine mammals and the sea in general. This should include:
 - A total ban on dolphin captures
 - Membership, ratification and enforcement of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol
 - A prohibition on the import or export of dolphins from your country (In the US, see the National Marine Fisheries Service)

- Increased resources to oversee and provide for those animals already in captivity
- Do not patronize captive dolphin shows. Buy or rent a video of dolphins in the wild with the money that you saved.
- Write to the appropriate body (the National Marine Fisheries Service in the United States; the Ministry of Environment in many countries) and ask that existing captive dolphin facilities be instituted to work toward the rehabilitation and release of wild-caught dolphins and the retirement of captive-bred animals.
- Urge your representatives to put protective legislation in place and to strengthen existing laws with regard to marine mammals.
In the United States, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) are the 2 pieces of legislation that deal with dolphins. The MMPA comes up for renewal approximately every four years. That's when amendments can be added. Your Senator or representative's office can supply you with complete copies of The Marine Mammal Protection Act as well as Animal and Plant Health inspection Service (APHIS) regulations that set the standards for enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act.

Check to see if your own country has laws in place to protect dolphins, both wild species and captive individuals.

The SPAW Protocol is another mechanism to protect wild dolphins. Press your officials to become a member, ratify and enforce this treaty.

- Write to the body that is in charge of overseeing captive dolphins. Tell them that the regulations for care and maintenance for marine mammals are in great need of improvement. Encourage them to take on this task. (In the US, this is the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service under the Department of Agriculture.)
- Speak out. A letter to the editor of your local newspaper will reach thousands of people. Write to daily and smaller newspapers.
- Encourage others to get involved in the plight of dolphins and show them how they can help.

IV: GETTING ORGANIZED

Now that you've identified the issues and have your team in place, it's time to lay the foundations to your campaign. The work you do here will serve as the backbone for your efforts so be sure to give this process the attention that it deserves.

- Learn from the examples of others.
Has your goal been attempted/achieved elsewhere? If so, try to learn what worked and what didn't in these situations.
- Research
Gather as many facts and figures as possible to support your argument. Make sure to double check your research and provide documentation for any information cited. Research differs according to the situation, but based on the situations WSPA has encountered, here are some suggestions as to the information you might want to collect:

Unknown or unreported illnesses are killing captive marine mammals

- Necropsy reports (wildlife agencies might be able to provide this information)
- Final disposition of cadavers
- Statistics on dolphin mortality
- Details about affected individuals (name, age, origin, etc)
- The conditions of the holding pen (size, water source, any possible water pollutants)
- Source and type of food
- Type of care received, who the specific providers are and their qualifications

Dolphins are to be captured for new or existing facilities

- Who issued the permits for these captures?
- Have population studies been done?
- Who has been hired to carry out the capture? What is this person's record?
- Do permitting officials have any financial ties to the facility?
- Is the capturing nation a member of SPAW or any other governmental body that calls for marine mammal protection?
- Videotape the capture if not able to prevent it.

Dolphins are being held in an area where no regulations exist for their care or are being kept in extremely poor conditions:

- Check for proper permits for these dolphins' capture or transport. If the dolphins came from the United States, does the facility meet minimum Animal Welfare Act standards?
- What type of program are these dolphins to be used in (private collection, encounter programs for tourists, etc.)?
- Assess conditions as described in Section II, "First Steps."

- Who are the owners of this facility and what is their background?

A proposal has been submitted to open some type of dolphin program.

- Who submitted the proposal and where are they getting their money.
- What is their record in other locations or that of their partners?
- What kinds of building permits and other processes they have to go through before the proposal is granted.
- Where do they plan to build? Is this a protected or otherwise sensitive area?
- Is there any kind of public hearing to debate the proposal?
- Where are the dolphins coming from?

- Determine your 3 key messages (*See Section VII, “Communications”*)
- Put your support materials in place. (*See Section VIII, Appendix A: “Support Materials”*)

In an ideal world, we’d be able to sit down and have a pleasant one-on-one conversation with each member of our audience. But in reality, much of your communications with the public and with decision makers will be conducted through the media, correspondence and the materials that you distribute.

Support materials, for use in press and information kits, will include items such as:

- Fact sheets
 - Wildlife agency reports
 - Opinion polls
 - Letters from government or civic leaders and animal welfare organizations
 - Suggestions for alternatives
 - Success stories from other facilities that implemented the changes you request
 - Petitions
 - Photos & videos
 - Statistics
 - Celebrity testimonials
 - Past news coverage on dolphin programs
 - Voting records for officials
- Line up experts and other key people to support your position
 - Marine mammal specialists
 - Animal protection organizations
 - Legislators
 - Civic groups
 - Hire an attorney

To a fledgling group, this may seem an expensive and unnecessary proposition. But it is critical to have an advisor just for those few instances when legal lines become blurred or confusing. Check your ranks for a member who is an attorney and willing to donate his services. Or, a local firm may offer reduced rates.

V: MEETING YOUR OPPONENT

Sometimes, the evidence of misconduct is so clear and overwhelming, that you will be able to go directly to the appropriate authorities. In cases such as these, you will be expected to cite the law or regulation you claim is being broken and who broke it, when and where. Or, public support for protecting dolphins may be so overwhelming that representatives will be extremely motivated to act.

But many times, this fight won't take place in the courts – it will occur in people's hearts and minds.

Going in with the Right Attitude:

Believe it or not, people who run dolphin shows are not evil. True, some are just in it for the money and have no concern for the dolphins other than as commodities. But many involved in the industry really do love the animals and believe that they're providing for them in the best way possible. Others feel that they're offering a valuable service to the public and that these ambassador animals are fostering conservation for the species as a whole.

You must also remember that facilities like Sea World have been around for a long time and have spent many years –and many dollars – promoting the image that captivity can be kind. Our messages are relatively new and some aren't going to be receptive to them right away. The public hears much more positive news about marine parks than negative news. You can't expect someone to completely change their mindset immediately just because you present them with the evidence. It's a big change and takes time.

Really *listen* to your opponent. Even though what they say may make your blood boil, you have to understand where they're coming from in order to formulate an effective strategy. While it may be difficult, you need to show compassion for your opponents – not disdain and impatience. When you come off as aggressive, demanding and radical, you are setting yourself up to lose. No one has sympathy for the messages or wants to listen to someone who is screaming at them and shoving information in their faces.

You can't MAKE people do what you want or think the way you want them to; **you can only try to teach and lead them.** Always keep this in mind. (Hint: Try to think of your opponent as a child. This might help you to listen and maintain patience.)

Working on the Problem Together:

First and foremost, you should always try to negotiate. Remember, most times, these facilities are about business and tourism. No corporate leader or government official is going to cut off a potential source of income when they see nothing wrong with captive

animal programs, unless there's something blatantly amiss. (Dolphins are dying; legal issues). So, you need to try and create a winning situation for everyone. (i.e., Are there alternative attractions that are animal friendly? What would the positive public relations windfall be?)

In Section II, we asked you to first answer 3 questions before moving ahead. In doing so, you identified those people and entities that are in a position to affect change. Now that you know who these people are, you need to really *get to know them*.

- *What are their motivators?*

While it would be wonderful to bring the world around to our way of thinking, the bottom line is that it doesn't really matter what motivates a person to act according to our wishes (provided it isn't anything illegal), as long as it helps the animals. In order to get someone to change their behavior, you need to appeal to what's important to them; to push the right buttons.

Compassionate people may be moved just by hearing about the miseries of life in captivity. A businessperson may be more concerned with providing jobs and making money than animal welfare. Voter popularity may be among the priorities of an elected official. And reputation with tourism concerns may be most important to Ministers of Tourism and other governmental officials. And it's your task to try and figure out to some degree what those things are that are important to your individual audiences and relate them to your cause. Is a politician up for re-election? Demonstrate that his constituents are proponents of your mission. Are you reaching out to the public through the media? Focus on the fact that captive facilities provide misinformation for children and are a detriment to your community.

How can you find these motivating factors? There's no exact science to playing "armchair psychiatrist", but gathering some simple information on your audiences may help you:

- What can people in your community tell you? What are people saying about this issue?
- Can you speak with someone who has worked in the facility in question or was formerly employed by the captivity industry?
- Gather annual reports and corporate information packets. What is its mission and key messages?
- Does this organization report to share holders?
- Become familiar with your opponent's chain of command and learn as much as possible about the individual personalities. You may find that one person who is sympathetic to your cause.
- Has your opponent been scrutinized (or championed) by the media? What can you learn about them from this source? (And the reporter may be willing to cover the company again if you present a strong enough story.)
- Determine which office/authority oversees the body with which you are dealing.
- Learn more about a company's or public official's record on animal welfare and environmental issues.

- What issues has your community rallied around in the past?
- *Messaging for specific audiences. (For more, see Section VII: Communications)*
You don't need to change your core messages to fit every new audience. In fact, these should stay the same, as they are the basic premise as to why you are waging this battle. Simply incorporate those issues that are important to your audience, along with your primary points, in any communications and in sending support materials.

For example, your key points may be that a dolphin capture will harm the local wild population; is a violent process; and that captivity is torture for these animals. But dolphin welfare alone may not persuade a Minister of Tourism. So, in your representations to this official, you might cite that, because capturing and keeping dolphins is inherently cruel (your core messages), more natural pursuits are gaining favor with eco-tourism operations (be sure to list those that visit your location) and that captive animal spectacles are increasingly seen as disreputable. An association with a captive facility may damage your town/state/country's reputation with an industry that is so important to your economy (the Minister's areas of interest).

- *Seek a meeting.*
Attempt to meet with any of those people/groups that you've identified as being in a position to exert some influence on this issue. Start with those that you think may be more receptive to your position and work your way down to the "bad guy." The more people you have on your side before you face your staunchest opponent, the better.

Write a formal request and follow up with a telephone call. Be sure to maintain a cordial, business-like tone. You are not adversaries; you are parties interested in the same issue and are looking for mutually acceptable solutions.

- *Develop Support Materials that Speak Directly to Your Contact: (For more, see Section VIII, appendix A: "Support Materials.")*
When pulling together information for your meeting, identify other tools that may help create momentum for your issue to show that there's interest/concern for this situation and that you have many people on your side. Show your opponent that you are a formidable foe. This can include:
 - Showing an elected official that constituents support your position via opinion polls, petitions, letters from the public or citizen testimonials.
 - Providing evidence from experts that this program is harmful to dolphins.
 - Demonstrating that you have media contacts to shine the spotlight on this issue and that you can help generate positive publicity when they act in your side's favor (or negative press if they work against you).

Send copies ahead of time (via overnight or certified mail so that you can confirm receipt) to allow for pre-meeting review. Mail your packet so that it is received 1-2 days prior to your meeting – enough time for review without giving an abundant opportunity to research and prepare a counterargument.

- *Don't go into your meeting expecting an answer.*
This is a multi-step process that you're going to have to work at consistently. The initial meeting is simply your first chance to present your case and evidence and start the dialogue about ways you might be able to meet everyone's needs. Ask for a follow up meeting to 1) give your side time to gather more information and support for your position; 2) allow the decision maker time to consider your arguments and requests; and 3) reassess and refine your own strategy and demands.
- *Acknowledge progress.*
Whenever you achieve a victory – no matter how small – be sure to give proper credit to everyone involved. And be sure to keep in touch with the decision makers so that they stay true to their word and don't proceed with the same plan once they have you off their backs. If possible, have them present their decision in some public forum (press conference, in writing, to a reporter). This will allow you to call attention to their change of heart and set an example for others to follow. Also, you have your new ally or former-opponent on record, making it that much more difficult for them to act contrary to their pledge.

If Negotiations Don't Succeed:

All is not lost. Public pressure and grassroots activism can still be effective in facilitating some sort of resolution or opening a door for future discussions. Employ a combination of the following tactics in accordance with how steadfast your opponent's refusal was or how unwilling they are to listen.

Use a graduated approach – don't play all your cards too quickly and leave yourself no room to maneuver. Again, it's preferable to try and negotiate than to engage in an all out power struggle. And remember, you're not opposed to the *people* involved in this enterprise: you're simply *for dolphins*.

- *Boycotts*
One thing we caution against is calling for boycotts. As a consumer, you may want to let hotel owners, park management, tourism officials, etc. know that you will not be patronizing their facility if they associate with captive dolphin programs. But a large-scale boycott takes much broad support and is difficult to organize. This should be your last-ditch effort and only if you really feel you can pull it off. More often than not, a call for a boycott is a smokescreen and your opponents know this. It's much better to take a long-term approach and be a constant thorn in their side than thinking that you will win the day with one grand gesture.
- *Using the media to create public awareness.*
Many people have affection for dolphins and you can use this to your advantage. The more people who are behind your cause, the better, so reach out to the public as often as you can through as many vehicles as you can.

- Do you have a public access television channel where you can purchase some airtime at a very low rate?
 - Do you know any members of the media who might be interested in this story? (Hint: Check the archives at your local library and search for reporters who have covered wildlife issues; community action stories; and other related topics.)
 - Write an opinion piece for your local newspaper. (*Hint*: Your paper might be more apt to print the piece if your issue somehow affects the community or is written by someone who is well known or affiliated with a well-known organization.)
 - Place an ad in a newspaper or magazine, talking about your issue and giving your phone number/web site for people to get more information.
 - Talk radio stations are always looking for ways to fill time. Send a package (who you represent; what your issue is; and who the experts are that are available for interview) and offer to make yourself available ANYTIME for an interview.
- *Host a public event.*
Give a *free* lecture to the public. (In giving a lecture, be sure to secure an expert to participate so that attendees will feel that they are learning from a credible source.) Many people won't come to an event that will be filled with conflict and tension, so the subject of your talk should be entertaining, important to the community or interesting. (i.e., Learn more about our dolphin friends; Promoting tourism in our town; Protecting our natural resources; Movie night – Free Willy, Flipper, etc, followed by a talk about dolphins.)

In the course of your presentation, subtly move to a discussion of your topic. You don't want people to feel ambushed or tricked into hearing what you have to say, so be sure to frame your comments in the context of the event that people came to see. (i.e., You show the movie Free Willy, then move into talking about how there's a real life Free Willy in your town. Discuss your tourism trade and gently express one opinion that, given all of the other opportunities for tourists in your city, perhaps being affiliated with captive dolphin programs might hurt your reputation with travelers.)

- *Hold a debate.*
No need to be subtle here. If your issue has been well publicized where you live – or if many people are familiar with the facility in question – invite a representative from your opposition and present each side. This can be risky if you're not well prepared. And again, be sure to have experts and other evidence on hand to back up your arguments.
- *Distribute information.*
Create a one-page, colorful, educational, perhaps even poignant – though not confrontational – piece available for free to the public. Good places to make them available (ask for permission first) are: public libraries; school libraries; coffee

houses; grocery stores; train and bus stations; at the facility itself (make sure you're on public property when you do this).

- *Letter writing campaigns.*

If an elected official is in a position to make the changes you want to see happen; letter-writing campaigns are an effective tool. This shows an official that his or her constituents care about an issue and that it is in their best interests to act in line with those people who secure their jobs.

For example, when WSPA was working with local activists in the United States to close a dolphin show that had experienced many animal deaths in a short time, letter writing was one of the tools we chose to use. Animal welfare organizations, members of the community and compassionate people from around the world flooded the mayor's office with requests to not renew the lease for the show's dolphins (No dolphins = no show). In deference to public pressure, not only did the mayor decide not to renew the contract, but the show closed months ahead of schedule.

- *Press conference (See Section VII: "Communications"):*

This type of event is typically held when you have some big news to announce (i.e., results of an investigation; the release of a report; someone of renown signing on to your campaign; announcing the launch of your group).

When inviting reporters to a press conference, it's often advisable to send out "teaser" media advisories a few days in advance and follow up with a phone call the day before and the day of the press conference. Provide enough information so that the reporter knows who you are representing, what you're working for and that you have something major to announce. But don't provide all the details. This will entice them to attend your event and will also protect you from giving your competition advance warning of the new weapon you have in your fight against them.

- *Petition and Opinion Polls.*

These tools can be used in showing decision makers – especially elected officials – that the public is on your side. Check out on-line petitioning and polling options.

- *Demonstrations and tabling events (emphasis on education).*

We suggest that you avoid the word "protest." This has a negative, confrontational connotation for many people.

Rules for demonstrating:

- Demonstrations must be legal and peaceful. You represent your cause, so be courteous.
- If you need a permit in order to demonstrate, get one. You can call City Hall or the police department and ask if you need one. Always get names of people you talk to on the phone. With the permit, you will be told where you are allowed to demonstrate. Explain this to everyone in the demonstration. You should not try to interfere with people attending the event or trying to buy a

ticket.

- If you have a lawyer, let him know what you're doing.
- Only one person should speak for the group. This avoids the appearance of conflict, which can destroy the effectiveness of the demonstration.
- Hand out dodgers (printed only on one side) that briefly explain your position and give the group's address and phone number. If someone tosses the dodger on the ground, pick it up and give it to someone else. If they tear it up, gather up the pieces and put them in the trash. Be pleasant at all times.

Introducing legislation.

Though no one wants to see dolphins in peril, this can be an opportune time to introduce legislation to strengthen existing laws or introduce a new bill. When the spotlight is shining directly on the threats to dolphins, the public and government officials are often more receptive and quick to act. (Either out of a heightened sense of awareness or to cover their tracks for not enacting and enforcing appropriate protective legislation in the first place.)

Some of the larger animal welfare organizations have departments that specialize in drafting legal documents and may be able to suggest wording or provide other resources. An attorney may be of assistance as well.

When approaching a government representative about sponsoring a new bill, be sure to provide as much supporting documentation as you can to demonstrate that the time is right, the change is warranted and that broad-based support exists for a new law.

- *Lawsuits and injunctions.*

At times – despite the objections of government officials and agencies, protests from the public and the best advice of marine mammal experts – dolphin profiteers will go ahead with a planned project because legal loopholes allow them to do so; because of cloudy or conflicting interpretations of statutes and regulations; or simply because they choose to flagrantly disobey the law.

In these circumstances, a lawsuit or injunction may be your best – perhaps only – recourse. An attorney can advise you if this strategy is applicable, but experience has seen dolphin advocates taking legal action in circumstances such as:

- The legality of a permit issue, transport or capture is in question. (An injunction will prevent dolphins from being captured or moved while the legal questions are addressed.)
- Sensitive ecosystems may be threatened by a proposed dolphin program. (This can refer to either wild dolphin populations or coastal areas where a facility may be located.)
- Government agencies charged with overseeing wild and captive dolphins are not performing to the letter of the law.

VI: DOLPHIN FACTS

Perhaps the most important aspect of your campaign for dolphins will be learning about the marine mammal you are fighting for. Whether your goal is to free a killer whale from a marine park or stop the capture of dolphins from the wild, you will need to be knowledgeable about your issue and prepared to support your arguments.

Outlined below are some fundamental facts about the most common marine mammal held in captivity, the bottlenose dolphin, and some frequently asked questions to help get you started.

Knowing the Basics:

Bottlenose dolphins belong to the scientific order Cetacea, which includes all whales. Cetacea is divided into three suborders, Odontoceti (toothed whales), Mysticeti (baleen whales) and Archaeoceti (extinct). Bottlenose dolphins are toothed whales and thus part of the Odontoceti group. Dolphins are part of the Family group Delphinidae that includes 30 different species, and their species is recognized as *Tursiops truncatus*.

Bottlenose dolphins can be found throughout the world in both temperate and tropical waters. Dolphins inhabit the pelagic zone as well as harbors, bays, lagoons, gulfs and estuaries. The worldwide population of bottlenose dolphins is currently unknown, however, they are not considered to be endangered.

The body size of bottlenose dolphins varies depending upon their habitat. For example, in the northwestern Atlantic, small body size is characteristic of the coastal ecotype, whereas, a larger body size is typical of the offshore ecotype. Bottlenose dolphins measured off the coast of Florida averaged between 8.2-8.9 feet and weighed between 419-573 pounds.

Bottlenose dolphins have a sleek and streamlined body shape that allows them to swim rapidly through the water. Their coloration exhibits slight variations of gray on the back and whitish pink tinges on the belly, lower jaw and anal regions. These dolphins have pectoral fins and flukes (the lobes of the tail), which help to steer, propel and stop the animals' motion. Bottlenose dolphins also have a dorsal fin for balance and a single blowhole located on the dorsal surface of the head through which they breathe.

Bottlenose dolphins have an acute sense of hearing and eyesight, both in and out of the water. Their sense of touch is also well developed and studies have shown that this marine mammal's skin is highly sensitive to a broad range of tactile sensations.

Social structure is a very important part of the wild dolphin world. Bottlenose dolphins live in social groups called pods. Pod size can vary but the relationships of its members are both consistent and strong. Researchers have found that pod members are able to recognize each other even after long periods of separation and that the relationship

between a mother and her calf are long lasting as well. In the wild, a calf will typically stay with its mother for 3-6+ years.

Pod members hunt and play together, mate and raise their offspring together, and even care for their ill and elderly together. Researchers have witnessed these dolphins supporting ill pod members and propelling them to the surface of the water so that they can breathe.

What's wrong with keeping dolphins in captivity?

IN NATURE...

Dolphins are free to move. Their bodies are built for speed and these fun-loving creatures take advantage of that fact. Never ones to lounge around, dolphins swim up to 40 miles per day at rates up to 3-7 miles per hour. And because there are countless creatures to chase and a huge world to explore in the ocean, dolphins spend as much time as they can under water and only 10-20% on the surface. They can hold their breath for as long as 20 minutes and dive to depths of more than 1,640 feet (500 meters).

In Captivity...

Dolphins are restricted to the size of their tank or enclosure. (Imagine spending your entire life trapped in a prison cell the size of a closet.) Because US regulations, which are often considered to be among the best in the world, only require that a pen be 30 x 30 feet long, a dolphin doesn't get very far before it runs into a wall or wire fence. Captive dolphins, especially those kept in tanks, spend most their time in a sort of stupor, swimming repeatedly in small circles or simply lying motionless on the surface of the water.

Just as poignant is the experience of captive bred dolphins. These animals never have the chance to experience the comfort and pleasure of belonging to a family. They are doomed to emotional isolation. And the one close bond they do form – with their mothers – is broken far too soon, as they are often confined to separate pens or sold off to another park or aquarium.

IN NATURE...

Dolphins are free to exercise their amazing gift of sonar. They use it to learn about the world around them, from exploring the intricacies and creatures hiding among coral reefs, to gathering information about the fish and other dolphins around them, to which predators might be lurking in the shadows. Their sonar tells them everything they need to know. The use of sonar is as important to dolphins as eyesight is to humans.

In Captivity...

Dolphins are restricted in using their sonar. It's useless in chasing live fish, because they only have access to the dead fish handed out by the trainers as a "reward." They can't put it to full use to explore their underwater world, because there isn't much to explore in a barren, concrete tank. Depriving dolphins of using their highly developed sensory tool

is one of the most damaging aspects of captivity. It is like forcing a person to wear a blindfold for the rest of his life.

What about US regulations?

- According to US regulations, dolphin pens only need to be 30x 30 feet. Dolphins in the wild swim up to 40 miles per day. This means that a dolphin would have to circle its pen more than 1,700 times everyday to simulate its natural range. Even the largest facilities in the world, which may hold dolphins in pens measuring 600 x 300 feet still only give a dolphin access to less than 1% of its natural range.
- According to US regulations, dolphin pens only need to be six feet deep. However, in warm weather shallow water heats quickly. This can be extremely uncomfortable – and often deadly – for the dolphins, who are unable to escape to cooler waters. The situation can be even more dire for dolphins kept in sea pens, where the water depth sinks to only a few feet during low tide. Not only is there no relief from the heat, but also the dolphin's sensitive skin can be exposed to the sun's scorching rays, causing agonizing blisters and sores.
- Water quality is often extremely poor in dolphin pens. In cement pools, the chlorine levels are designed to keep bacteria levels safe for humans, wreaks havoc on a dolphin's skin and eyes. At the other extreme, tidal sea pens are usually in secluded areas, such as lagoons, where the water doesn't circulate as much as it does in the open ocean. Dolphins excrete 4 - 5 times more waste than the average human. Without proper replacement cycles, the water can become dangerously polluted.
- Dolphin families are close-knit and social. The young depend heavily on their mothers and stay with them for several years. Some dolphins in US programs were taken from the wild. Others are the products of breeding programs, designed to sustain the country's stock of performing dolphins. Regardless, families are routinely torn apart and spirits are crushed by this industry.
- Bottlenose dolphins in the wild often hunt cooperatively. In open waters, a dolphin pod will encircle a large school of fish and herd them into a small, dense mass, the dolphins then take turns charging through the school to feed. In captivity, these intricate social bonds are broken and the dolphins are forced to beg for scraps of dead fish.

Red flag behaviors of captive dolphins:

Most visitors to marine parks and swim-with-the-dolphin programs accept every behavior displayed by the dolphins at face value, they do not question why the dolphin is doing certain things or whether or not the behavior is natural or comfortable for the dolphin.

Your job as a dolphin advocate is to look behind the façade created by the captivity industry and recognize the truth behind the dolphins' "smile".

- *Training Regimens*

Spectators to a captive dolphin program will often see the animals perform tricks that they equate with human responses and emotions. Movement of the pectoral flippers is taken to mean that the dolphins are waving a greeting. Vocalizing seems to indicate that the animals are "speaking" to the crowd. Or, the dolphins swim directly up to tourists entering the water, apparently signaling their enthusiasm to interact. In reality, these are highly unnatural behaviors that hold no meaning for the animal and offer no insight into their state of mind.

What the crowd sees is simply the result of conditioning. The animal overrides its natural behaviors and instincts in anticipation of receiving some kind of reward – typically pieces of fish. Termed by some as "positive reinforcement," this method is actually a form of food deprivation. Since a satiated dolphin will not perform, the animals are left to go hungry. Even when they complete the desired behavior, the food reward is slight so as to sustain the desire in the animal to please. Simply put, a performing dolphin is a hungry dolphin.

This is particularly obvious when a trainer enters the holding area, carrying a bucket of fish. You will notice that the dolphin's eyes are fixed on the bucket, not on the trainer. It is easy to overlook this detail, as most audiences are watching and listening to the trainer. But in observing the dolphin's body language, it is apparent that food is the motivator, not affection for the trainer, playfulness or an affinity for the crowd.

- *Common Sights at Dolphin Facilities and Shows*

- Dolphins always seem to be smiling, which many interpret as a sign of happiness.

Dolphins appear to smile only because of the way their mouths are shaped; it is not a reflection of their emotional state. Whether free or captive, content or in pain, dolphins always appear to smile and eager to please.

- Dolphins beach themselves to let people pet or kiss them.

The aquatic environment is practically gravity free and, therefore, supports a dolphin's substantial weight. When dolphins beach themselves in the wild, they do so because they are sick, disoriented, injured or otherwise in some kind of distress. Many of the beached animals die from the resulting pressure and damage to their internal organs. A captive dolphin that lifts itself out of the water and onto a platform or stage has been trained to beach itself on command. The discomfort can be great and permanent injury is only avoided

by the trainer recalling the animal to the water in due time.

- Dolphins swim gracefully in circles around their enclosures.

In the wild, a bottlenose dolphin – the species most commonly used in captive dolphin swim programs – swims up to 40 miles per day. In a fenced-in area or a tank, the dolphins are often restricted to swimming in circles.

In many dolphins, this behavior is a sign that the dolphin is suffering psychologically: it is engaging in what is known as a stereotypical behavior. In humans, familiar stereotypical behaviors include obsessive-compulsive disorders and the rocking motion and unresponsive state seen in distressed individuals.

- Dolphins on either side of a gated pen splash and slap their tails. To the layperson, this seems to be a joyful exchange between animals that are happy to see each other.

Far from an expression of playfulness, these dolphins are agitated, frustrated and stressed. They are trying to reach each other but are blocked by a wire fence.

- Some facilities claim that their dolphins are partially free – that they have unrestricted access to the open ocean and return of their own free will.

This scenario is merely an example of clever advertising but does not denote freedom for the animals. Dolphins are only released from their pens when they're hungry, ensuring the trainer that the animals will stay in the area. Stripped of their ability to hunt on their own and psychologically dependent on their trainers, the dolphins are compelled to return when the hunger overcomes them. In the United States, it is illegal to allow a dolphin outside of its pen.

- *Signs of Aggression*

The number of incidents of dolphin aggression towards humans is difficult to determine, as there currently are no reporting requirements for such occurrences. However, substantial evidence does exist, particularly as reported by the media, that human-dolphin injuries are perhaps more common than the public is led to believe. This statistic is expected to rise as 1) more dolphins are taken from the wild to populate swim programs and captive shows (since wild animals tend to be more aggressive and difficult to manage); and 2) an increasing number of dolphin facilities are opening, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, with staffs inexperienced in marine mammal care and management.

Government assessments of swim-with-the-dolphin programs clearly state that

dolphins are least likely to be aggressive and dangerous only when the MOST controls are put on them and their natural behaviors are suppressed. Not only is this requirement contrary to industry claims that such endeavors promote species education and conservation, but continued submission causes great anxiety in the animals, which further manifests into physiological ailments and even death.

Dolphins demonstrate aggression by:

- Raking their teeth along your limbs.
- Pushing, bumping or head butting.
- Approaching with an open mouth and “jaw popping”, which is a warning sign.
- Pulling swimmers under the surface.
- Not allowing participants to leave the water.

Women and children are most often the targets for aggressive dolphin behaviors.

It is important to recognize that though some aggressive acts are intentional, many injuries are accidental. Dolphins can weigh from 300 to 1200 pounds, which is more than some horses. At times, the animals don't know their own strength or simply can't get out of the way in time to avoid a collision.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls:

- *Knowing the dolphin species.*
When putting together a dolphin fact sheet for your members, the general public and the media, it's important that the information you provide is factual. There are about 76 species of dolphins and they are all different. Educate yourself on the specific characteristics of the particular dolphin species you are referring to. Is your campaign aimed at closing down a facility that keeps bottlenose dolphins? Or is your campaign directed at preventing the import of a Pacific white-sided dolphin or a beluga whale? Make sure that your fact sheet provides information on the specific species of dolphin you're dealing with.

Just one example: “Dolphins in the wild live in highly organized family pods and swim up to 100 miles a day.” This statement doesn't tell the reader which dolphin species we're talking about. In many cases, you'll be dealing with bottlenose dolphins, and the statement above was from a fact sheet on this species. But bottlenose dolphins don't swim up to 100 miles per day. This information applies to another dolphin species, the orca, also known as the killer whale.

Avoid oversights like this, as they can undermine your credibility. You don't have to be a marine biologist to talk intelligently about dolphins, but you do need to know the characteristics of the species you are concerned about.

- *Knowing dolphin issues.*
Another common mistake is the mention of the tuna-dolphin problem. Dolphin

advocates sometimes lump several issues together in an attempt to call attention to all of the injustices done to this much-loved creature. In actuality, spinner and spotted dolphins are the species that get caught in tuna nets, not bottlenose dolphins (the species most commonly used in captive facilities). So as not to confuse things, it's best to stick to one topic.

- *Using US regulations as a role model.*

When concerned citizens are mobilizing to prevent a proposed dolphinarium from being established in their country, one of the first tools they consider using is this: "Can't we stop it by arguing that this new facility won't live up to US standards and is therefore substandard and cruel?"

The answer is an unequivocal "no." In the United States, the government agency that sets the standards for the keeping of Cetacea in captivity, such as the required amount of space, is the U.S. department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS). By US standards, it is legal to confine a dolphin in an enclosure that measures no more than 30 by 30 feet, 6 feet deep, a requirement that is woefully inadequate and easy to exceed.

Just because standards exist, this doesn't mean that they're appropriate or well enforced. The bottom line is that no facility – no matter how well regulated, well funded or well intentioned – can provide for these animals, including the "shining examples" put forth by the United States.

- *The "If we're going to do it, let's do it right" pitfall.*

"What is the required amount of space a captive dolphin needs in order to be happy?" is another question that first-time campaigners often ask. They want to use this information to argue with the authorities that the size of the facility they are fighting is too small and therefore must be shut down or at least made bigger. The answer is, *any* tank or enclosure is too small for a dolphin. Given the fact that a bottlenose dolphin swims up to 40 miles per day, no captive program can make a case that it is meeting a dolphin's needs and no supposed standard set by a government can be called sufficient.

This work is not about making the cage bigger, it's about *abolishing* the cage. The answer to the question is simple: The only habitat that meets a dolphin's space requirements is -- the open sea.

- *Life Span.*

There has been much debate about the longevity of captive dolphins compared with that of dolphins in the wild. Some welfare and research groups suggest that the average life span of captive dolphins is about five years compared with 45 years in nature. However, this statement is not only misleading as it attempts to compare a dolphins' maximum longevity with their average life spans, but it is also irrelevant to your cause. A common mistake made by dolphin advocates is placing too much emphasis on captive dolphins' average lifespan compared with that of dolphins in

nature, thus reducing this issue to a question of how long a captive dolphin can be kept alive. It's nothing short of saying that if the dolphin captivity industry were able to keep their dolphins alive for a certain amount of time, then there wouldn't be a problem with capturing and confining these animals. But an animal's life span cannot be used as a measurement for the animal's well being. Remember, the dolphin captivity issue is not about *quantity* of life, it's about *quality* of life.

Handling Delicate Questions:

There are a number of questions you will be asked when announcing your opposition to dolphin captivity. In many cases a journalist who has first interviewed the "other side" will ask you questions like these:

Q. What about "special cases" like Make-a-Wish Kids or other disabled or ill children? Don't they experience therapeutic benefits by swimming with dolphins?

A. We can certainly understand a person going to any length possible to help an ill or disabled loved one. But there is absolutely no scientific evidence to substantiate the claim that spending time in a tank or enclosure with dolphins has healing results for special-needs children.

However, pet-assisted therapy with dogs, cats and horses is a well-proven technique that enables a child to receive consistent affection and stimulation that can be beneficial in their treatment. Considering the alternatives, why not adopt a pet from a shelter and change *two* lives for the better?

Q. Kids from the inner city would never otherwise see a dolphin, would they?

A. This argument supposes that we should keep every example of species captive to entertain and supposedly educate anyone who's even remotely interested. The information technology revolution virtually guarantees that all of us – in some form or another – can develop a much greater understanding of the world's creatures without ever plucking them from the oceans or putting them in cages.

Q. If dolphins weren't on display, how would people learn to care about them or protect them?

A. First, there's no scientific evidence to support the claim that these programs actually foster conservation. Humpback whales are appreciated and protected by people who have never even seen a humpback whale. On the other hand, tigers and rhinos are on the brink of extinction, despite the fact that these animals have been displayed in zoos and circuses for years. SWTD facilities offer no educational value. In fact, it can be said that these programs are *miseducating* the public, obscuring the true nature and behaviors of dolphins and, instead, portraying them as playthings to be dominated for human amusement.

Q. What's wrong with keeping a few dolphins in captivity? There are millions of them out there.

A. Countless studies show that dolphins experience great amounts of stress in captivity and that a captive environment cannot provide for the complex physical and psychological needs of these creatures. Confinement is torture for these intelligent, social animals. That's why we are against captivity.

VII: COMMUNICATIONS: MESSAGING AND INTERVIEWING

The Concept of “Messaging”

Saying the right things, at the right time, in the right way to the right people is the key to waging any successful campaign. Whenever you open your mouth, write a letter, etc., you are delivering messages, whether you intend to or not. Make sure you are putting out the information that you want. While our issue is certainly an emotional one, be sure to back up poignant comments or messages with rational arguments and hard facts. Blind emotion without anything to support it isn't going to get you anywhere.

- *Targeting your audience. (For more, see Section II: “First Steps”)*

First, you need to determine who your audiences are. Would you speak with a 40-year old adult the same way you would with a 10-year old child? Of course not. A key to effective communication is knowing who your audience is and directing your tone, word choice and body language to that person/group. You can deliver the same message in a number of different ways that is tailored to your audience.

In some cases, you may need to reach out to the general public. In others, you may be dealing directly with government officials or other decision makers. And sometimes, you will need to use the media as your primary tool. There are countless audience types out there. Keep this in mind at all times. Use language they can relate to. Never yell or be demanding of someone; don't talk down to anyone; nor do you want to speak over someone's head.

- *Don't “preach to the choir.”*

In order to make change, you need to do just that – change people's way of thinking. Therefore, while you first want to enlist as much support as you can from like-minded people, a larger part of your job will be to reach out to those who are unaware, uninterested or do not believe or endorse your position. Typically, most people fall into that middle category: don't know, undecided, not aware. When reaching out via any public forum, keep in mind that this is the audience you should be directing your comments towards.

Your Core Messages

Your core messages are those few, key points that – if they learn nothing else – you want people to absorb and understand after hearing you speak, reading your literature, etc.

- *Developing Core Messages.*

Many times, you will be delivering your messages via telephone call, in an interview or in meetings with officials. They need to be short and memorable – people will forget an overabundance of information or too many details that don't get right to the point.

As you know, there are so many issues and problems associated with the captive dolphin industry that you could talk for hours about why people and decision-makers should support your platform. But don't. The average person can only digest so much information at one time. That's why communications professionals strongly recommend that you pick **3 – 4 key messages** to demonstrate your position and stick with them. Hopefully, you will have the opportunity to elaborate on each of your points. But if not, these few points will do a sufficient job of covering all the bases and conveying the gist of your argument.

(See Section VI, "Dolphin Facts", to help determine what your issues are.)

An example might be:

- Life in captivity is torture for these intelligent and social animals.
- At this very moment, dolphins are being torn from their families and ocean homes, sentenced to a life of performing mindless tricks for food.
- Every time someone buys a ticket to a dolphin show – or at a facility or theme park that holds captive dolphins – they are paying to torment these much-loved creatures.

- *Support your core messages.*

Now that you've identified the primary points you want to convey, you need to provide evidence to substantiate them. Under each core message, list any supporting evidence or examples you can offer. If you possess information or data that pertains to your unique situation, then by all means include them. For example:

- Core message: "At this very moment, dolphins are being torn from their families and ocean homes, sentenced to a life of performing mindless tricks for food."
- Evidence: "Fisherman, contracted by X-Named Park, took three dolphins from X-Named Bay just 10 days ago. The animals are all females of mating age, which may mean that they were separated from their offspring during the capture."

Not to worry if you don't have such specific details. You can still have a strong impact with factual, generalized statements:

- Core message: "Life in captivity is torture for these intelligent and social animals."
- Evidence: "Training methods can be harsh, including food deprivation, and the animals are forced to perform behaviors that are completely unnatural to them."

- *Calls to Action.*

People are moved by your statements. Now what? One of your core messages should always be some type of call to action. After all, while you want people to understand your position, what you ultimately want is for them to take some steps to aid your cause. As such, make this the last piece of information you deliver in your

publications; during an interview; and any other occasion where you are speaking on your issue.

- Don't buy a ticket.
- Stop dolphin captures.
- Visit our web site for more information.
- Write to your elected officials today.
- Attend a demonstration.
- Sign a petition.

Speaking with the media

- *Who will represent your organization and its agenda?*

Choose one or two organizational **spokespeople** that are knowledgeable and skilled at public speaking. These people must be comfortable with the full range of issues on your platform.

In addition, you should augment your list of speakers with experts who can be called on to address the technical elements of your issue. (veterinarians, marine mammals biologists, researchers)

- *Media Training.*

Sometimes, people are so close to an issue that they feel the need to cover every base to get their point across. While the information may be useful, too many details are confusing and boring. Everyone needs extra training to learn how to stick to the point and to think on his or her feet.

Are you able to arrange some media training for your spokespeople? A public relations firm or other media training group may discount their fee or do *pro bono* work if interested in your cause. You can also check with those who teach public relations and public speaking (and related courses) at local schools. Or at the very least, check out a book or videotape from your local library on this topic.

Interview Prep: The Basics

Again, we encourage you to learn as much about effective public speaking as possible, but these tips should get you started.

- When called for an interview, find out what program you'll be on and who the interviewer is. Then, do some research first to learn more about this person's style, the types of stories they cover and so on. This will give you some idea of how they will approach you and the types of questions they may ask.
- Send a press kit so that the reporter can verse himself on your organization, its stance

and your issue. (*See Section VIII, Appendix A*)

- Stick to the point: *Bridging*
You are participating in this interview for one reason and one reason only – to deliver your messages and issue a call to action. But reporters – either by accident or by design – don’t always cooperate. The most effective tool to keep the interview on course is through a technique called “**bridging**.”

Imagine that you’re in a car with two steering wheels: you’re at the controls of one and the reporter is at the other. You want to show them around the familiar streets of “Dolphin Freedom Land.” This is where your messages live and everything revolves around the issues that are pertinent to you. But reporters are rarely experts on your issue, so they tend not to stick to the points that you want; go off in different, strange directions; or they try to steer the story in a completely different way to suit their own needs and interests.

You’re battling for control of the car. And if you find that the reporter has taken the car – and you – to some far off land, you simply assume control and **TAKE THE BRIDGE** back to “Dolphin Freedom Land.”

This is not to say that you should completely ignore a reporter’s questions and talk about whatever you wish. You don’t want to completely shift gears and make too big a leap. This is a gentle way to redirect an interview.

Step 1: Acknowledge what you can in the question and then move on to

Step 2: Use a bridge phrase to get back to your messages. Here are some examples:

- What I’m really here to talk about....
- That’s an interesting question, but what we should be focusing on is....
- That is not the real issue. The real issue is....
- What is very important for your viewers/readers to think about is....
- While your point is certainly important, don’t forget that....
- That’s not my area of expertise, but what I can tell you is...
- The main point is being lost here and that is...
- Let’s begin by clarifying the facts...

Step 3: Get back to your core messages

Here’s an example of bridging at work:

Reporter: Mr. Jones, shouldn’t we be more concerned with providing/maintaining jobs than with some dolphins?

Mr. Jones: [*Step 1*] You bring up an important consideration...

[*Step 2*] but what is also important is that...

[Step 3] dolphins are being torn from their homes and families and kept in substandard facilities. We don't want to see anyone – human or creature –suffer.

[Call to action] That is why NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION is urging concerned citizens to vote against the proposal to open a swim program here in our town.”

- *KISS: Keep It Short and Simple*

While there's certainly a lot of ground to cover when talking about the issues associated with dolphin captivity, you will lose the attention and interest of your audience if you say too much at one time. Try to answer questions with no more than 2-3 sentences. Any more than that and you're getting long winded. Deliver your core messages, perhaps with an evidence statement, and then CLOSE YOUR MOUTH!

Here's a tip about an old reporter's trick (Try this on friends or colleagues and see what happens!): A reporter will ask you a question. You answer – short, simple and to the point. And then what happens? The reporter stays silent. What do you do? You feel obligated to fill the uncomfortable silence, so you keep talking. Before you know it, you're off of your message points, rambling on and getting yourself in trouble.

Don't be goaded into saying more than you want to. If someone tries this ploy on you – perhaps a reporter or an opponent in a debate – simply stay silent. Or, you can make it clear that you're finished by saying something like, “Shall we move on?” or “I'll take another question now.”

- *Avoiding and Overcoming Slip-Ups.*

With a little preparation and confidence, anyone can conduct a first-rate interview. But even a seasoned professional can make mistakes. Here are some suggestions on how to be at your best and hints on getting back on track if you do make a small misstep.

- Take time to answer your question; think it out before you speak.
- Create some sound bytes (these may be your core messages) and incorporate them into the interview.
- Don't take anything personally. Opponents and reporters may try to bait you – don't fall for it. Either laugh off or ignore any comment that may be directed to you personally. If you respond, you're giving them exactly what they want. And if you act appropriately, it will call even further attention to their improper behavior and make them look bad.
- Never say “No comment.”

- *Nothing* is “off the record.”
- If you are representing an organization, coalition, etc., do not express personal opinions, even if asked.
- At times, you may find that your local media outlets are not as unbiased as they should be. A reporter will typically record your interview and you may want to do the same in case you need to prove that you were misquoted or misrepresented.
- If you make a mistake, don’t get flustered. Remember, you know more about this subject than the reporter or your audience. Take a breath or two, reorganized your thoughts and proceed. It’s not the end of the world.
- If your mind goes blank or you simply don’t understand what they’re saying, feel free to say, “I’m sorry, I missed your question” or “Sorry, I’m not sure I understand what you’re asking.”
- If you feel like your answer is going in the wrong direction or you’re not happy with how you’re presenting your answer, just start over. It is perfectly acceptable to say “Let me say that in a different way” or “Let me rephrase my last comment.”
- Pause to collect your thoughts for a second or two. You’re under no obligation to provide rapid-fire answers to any question. Take some time to think about what you want to say.
- If you don’t know an answer, don’t bluff; don’t lie; and don’t guess. “I don’t know the answer to that off hand but can certainly get that information for you” will get you off the hook.
- If you’re constantly interrupted by the reporter or by someone representing your opponent, try “If I may complete my thought, because this is an important point...”
- Did I say that?
When giving an interview, particularly on television, editing can work for or against you if a reporter tries to put words in your mouth. This is *not* the norm, but it reminds us that we should also be careful about the way we phrase our answers.

To give an example:

A reporter paraphrases or interprets something you said...

”So, Mr. Jones, you’re saying that dolphins are more important than jobs.”

Your inclination would be to respond, “I didn’t say dolphins are more important than jobs.”

What can happen? An editor can accidentally or perhaps even intentionally cut out the words “I didn’t say...” and now there’s a video clip of you saying, “Dolphins are more important than jobs.”

Again, the chances of this happening to you are slim, but just to be safe, don’t repeat what a reporter says when he misquotes or misrepresents your comments. Just bridge back to your messages. This simple technique can turn the situation above into:

”So, Mr. Jones, you’re saying that dolphins are more important than jobs.”

”No, don’t put words in my mouth/No, that’s no what I said./Not at all. What I’m saying is that we can provide for people while still protecting dolphins.”

- *Tone, body language and presentation*

In our image-driven world, how you say something is just as important as what you say. Follow some of these simple tips on voice and body language. You might want to practice some of these skills in a “mock” interview so that you’re practiced and comfortable during the real thing.

Tone:

- Don’t raise your voice; maintain a sincere and helpful tone. You want to appear confident, knowledgeable, friendly and relaxed, not hostile, defensive or nervous.
- Just as important is that you shouldn’t whisper. A strong, firm voice shows confidence.
- Don’t speak too quickly. Maintain an even pace. This will help you to remain composed and will also give the reporter and your audience time to absorb what you’re saying.
- Avoid “jargon” or highly technical words. Use words and analogies that the average person can understand.
- Keep your sentences brief.

Body Language:

- Maintain eye contact with the reporter. This isn’t a staring contest, but averting your eyes, especially when answering a question, can give the

impression that you are unsure of your answer or have something to hide.

- Sit up straight. (Trick: If you're wearing a jacket, sit on it. This will pull your shoulders up and your back straight.)
- Don't lean to one side.
- Keep feet flat on the floor or cross your legs towards the interviewer.
- Rest your elbows lightly on the chair arms or loosely in your lap.
- Avoid tilting your head – this communicates uncertainty.

Personal Presentation:

- Men: Don't wear black suits
 Avoid extreme colors or patterns (grays and blues work particularly well)
 White shirts don't work well in photos or on camera. Pale blue or one with wide stripes are better.
- Women: A suit or well-tailored dress work best.
 Avoid extremely short skirts, pure white blouses and wild patterns.
 Wear your hair off your face.
 Keep jewelry to a minimum.
 Wear brighter colors on top and darker colors on the bottom.

VIII: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SUPPORT MATERIALS

Behind every successful campaign there needs to be a firm foundation of knowledge and evidence that you can use to support your position. Once you have researched your issue and are able to present your position to the public, you need to have something to leave with them to help them to remember your key points and influence them in their decision-making. This is where your support materials come into play. You will need to dedicate time to producing fact sheets and press kits to aid you in “spreading the word.”

Press/Informational Kits:

These kits will contain all of the vital information concerning the issue you are tackling, the key players involved, your position and evidence to show why a change is needed. The contents of this kit may vary depending upon your given audience, however, every kit should include the following key items: Who We Are, Position Paper, Issue Backgrounder, and contact information for your organization and/or spokespeople.

- *Background Materials*
 - Who We Are –what your interest is in the issue and how you became involved
 - Position Paper – present the problem and what you hope to accomplish
 - Issue Backgrounder – brief history of the issue and your involvement, achievements thus far
 - Contact information for your organization and/or spokespeople
 - List of experts available to comment –include their credentials/involvement with the issue
 - Any press releases issued and media coverage received to date
 - Photos, video or witness testimonials to illustrate your point (Note: Most media outlets prefer to receive photos in slide format or as high-resolution electronic files. Most TV stations can use VHS tape but prefer Beta footage.)

- *Fact Sheets*
 - Realities of dolphin captivity (*See Section VI: “Dolphin Facts”*)
 - Lists of violations or dolphin illnesses/deaths at a facility you are targeting.
 - Information on past infractions or controversies surrounding those involved with the captive program you are targeting.
 - List of laws being broken or weaknesses in current laws, which allowed the current situation to develop.
 - NOTE: These are called FACT sheets for a reason. When making claims against a person or facility or providing scientific data, you need to support any information you provide. Be sure to include citations. Don’t just say that your opponent was involved in something questionable provide proof via newspaper articles, arrest records, CITES documents, etc.

- *Media advisories and press releases*

A media advisory is intended to give reporters advance notice that an event is about to take place. (Dolphins being captured or moved; your spokespeople/experts will be commenting on a proposed facility; you've planned a press conference). Typically, an advisory will be sent 4-7 days before the event. You'll want to follow up to be sure that you are on the assignment calendar, ask if there are any questions at this point, and try to generate interest in your issue. Call the reporter again the day before or the day of the event as a reminder. A media advisory should be brief and provide:

Who is involved in this event?

What is the significance?

When – date, time, place

Why: Background as to why this is an important issue.

Also be sure to give the name and contact information of a media representative or spokesperson who can answer any questions a reporter might have.

Reporters often don't know from day-to-day what the "hot" stories will be and what they'll be assigned to cover. So while it helps to send an advisory to get on their calendars of upcoming events, getting there first doesn't do any good. Coverage of your event depends on how well you sell your issue and what competing stories are occurring the same day.

A press release is issued the day of a news event. (You can even send one a few days after if the story hasn't been covered broadly in the media and is still "fresh.") The idea of a press release is first, to interest a reporter so that he will want to pursue a story on the subject; and second, to provide sufficient background so that, should he choose, a reporter can write a story on your issue without having to attend an event or even conduct an interview.

Instead of following the "Who, What, When and Why" format, a press release tells the larger story. Many reporters are working on tight deadlines, so try to sum up the general idea of your story in the first paragraph and then elaborate in the following sections. (See your own local paper for examples of how stories are presented.)

- *Other Useful Support Materials*

Motivated citizens and animal protection groups will often be happy to write letters of support or concern to government leaders supporting your position. Make sure to get copies of these letters from them so that you have demonstrable evidence that such support exists.

Business and Civic Associations (e.g., Whale and dolphin watch enterprises and dive associations are often opposed to captive dolphin ventures because it affects the wild populations and hence, their businesses. Do you have an eco-tourism society that operates in your area?)

Testimonials from those who have taken similar actions in the past (i.e., Did a town near you close a dolphin exhibit? Get a letter from campaign organizers and those who made the decision – mayor, town council – etc.)

Letters of support from:

- Other NGOs and environmental groups (HSUS/HSI, WSPA, WDCS, etc.)
- Government leaders
- Celebrities
- Business interests

Take an opinion poll to see how people feel about your issue

Collect signatures on a petition to demonstrate local support

Collect relevant statistics (captive dolphin deaths, # of captures per year) and other background materials to support your argument

Case histories of incidents involving dolphins in captivity (i.e., human injuries, dolphin illnesses, deaths, welfare violations)

List of other cities, towns or countries that have taken action against captive facilities

APPENDIX B – RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

- Web searches for past media reports on opponents
- Freedom of Information Act findings and reports
- CITES documents
- Marine Mammal Inventory Reports
- Voting records
- Corporate annual reports
- Building permits
- SPAW Protocol
- Animal welfare organizations
- Web searches for marine mammal experts
- Library searches for related topics
- Lexis-Nexis searches for opponent lawsuits/legal issues
- Government resources (i.e., APHIS website for U.S. issues)
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Marine Mammal Stranding Centers
- Local newspapers for relevant stories

APPENDIX C – TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LETTER WRITING

First and foremost, when encouraging your members, community, etc. to write to decision makers on an issue, keep in mind that personal letters from individuals carry more weight than form letters. Writing your own letter takes time, effort and thought, which shows that the letter's author really cares about your issue, whereas anyone can sign a form letter. But still, a form letter is better than nothing.

Second, correspondence should be sent through the postal service. If your issue is urgent or you're facing a deadline, send your letters via fax. Sending letters of concern via email is a last resort. In many places, email correspondence is seen as having low priority and credibility. Many people don't even check their emails.

Content

- Make sure your letter is addressed to a named individual (instead of "Dear Sir or Madame"). Contact information for political representatives can be found at your local library, via the Internet or through the phone book/directory assistance.
- Be polite but firm.
- Keep your letter short and to the point.
- Make sure the information you give is factually correct.
- Be clear about what you want to see happen -- tell them exactly what action you would like them to take and make it as concrete as possible. (e.g. "I want you to stop this now" is not as helpful as "I would like you to make it a priority to work with the Soviet Ambassador to find alternate trapping methods.")
- Include your address and ask for a response to your letter, informing you of how this person/government office/etc plans to proceed.
- Appeal to their business sense:
 - If you're a constituent, let your representatives know that the way they deal with this issue (or fail to deal with it) may affect your voting decision in the next election.
 - If writing to someone in another geographical area, tell them that his/her position on the issue makes you reluctant to visit his/her country, state, or province, and that you are now inclined to spend your money elsewhere.
 - If you are writing to a company, tell them that their affiliation with captive dolphin programs is damaging to their reputation and that you personally will not purchase any more of their products until this matter is resolved.

- Give the full name of any proposed law or parliamentary bill that you want to see passed.
- Cite any specific laws or regulations that you feel are being broken and who is responsible for overseeing them.
- Keep the pressure on. Is there anyone else to whom you can write?
- Write letters to congratulate organizations and governments if they make changes to improve animal welfare.

Using the correct form address

There are no hard and fast rules for addressing important officials. The following simple rules will help you achieve the right tone:

Presidents: **Dear Mr./Ms. President**

Mailing address to Members of Congress: **The Honorable John Doe**

Greeting to Member, Senate: **Dear Senator**

Greeting to Member, House of Representatives: **Dear Congressman/woman**

Mailing address to Ambassadors: **His/Her Excellency John/Jane Doe**

Greeting to Ambassador: **Dear Ambassador Doe**

Prime Ministers: **Dear Prime Minister Doe**

End your letters: **Respectfully yours**

Sincerely

Other officials and elected representatives: **Dear [Title] Doe**

Writing to newspapers, TV or radio stations

- If you want something to be published, make it as short and to the point as possible.
- Explain what you are doing locally to try and help animals.
- Give a brief synopsis of the issues. Explain why local people should be concerned and how this problem affects the community.

APPENDIX D – LEGAL CONCERNS

In interviews you might give out and in your printed statements, don't let your enthusiasm exceed the facts.

Neither should you assume that quoted material you've found in the media is correct. It would be correct to say that John Doe was quoted saying "Such and such" in a certain edition of a periodical, but not that he actually said it. If you need to know whether he actually said it or not, you should verify it with him directly. And even then, it would not necessarily survive cross-examination in a court of law unless you can prove it with a witness who would back you up.

Watch out for libel. But don't be paralyzed by it. I'm not a lawyer, but I have a working theory about libelous statements in the United States. If you deal in facts and your motives are pure - don't worry about it.

Libel is too complicated to examine here except in a cursory way. You should know, however, that libel is not merely a false statement. Nobody is perfect. Libel is a statement that is published (meaning circulated to the public) and injures somebody's reputation. (Your reputation is what other people think of you.) What you write in a private letter is not libelous because it's not published. You also cannot libel the dead or anyone with a bad reputation. And it's very difficult to libel a public figure, the reason being that he put himself in the public eye and must take the risk of criticism.

As a practical matter, any statement that might injure anyone's reputation should be checked and rechecked. If the statement is true and you can prove it, go ahead and use it if you need to. Bottom line: Truth and a lack of malice is an absolute defense to charges of libel, provided you can prove it and there was a good reason to publish it in the first place.

One further thing: libel is not easy to prove. In order for the person libeled to collect in a court of law, he must show (prove) that the statement led directly to his financial loss. Try to enlist the help of a pro-bono lawyer. If you have the money, hire one that is interested in these issues.

Survey (for cover and on web site)

Thank you for taking a few moments to complete this survey. We all share the goal of keeping dolphins wild and aiding those currently in captivity. The answers you provide will help WSPA to better serve dolphin advocates – and the dolphins themselves.

1. What was the issue you were facing?
2. Who were your opponents?
3. Who were your allies?
4. What was your strategy in addressing this issue?
5. What obstacles did you encounter in carrying out your strategy?
6. Did you learn something from your experience that should be included in this toolkit?
7. Were there pieces of this toolkit that were especially useful to you?
8. Were there any sections that you found confusing or unhelpful?