

# **Building the political party organisation of tomorrow**

**Lessons from the voluntary sector**

**European Socialist Parties Conference**

**Mike Hudson**

**June 2000**



Compass Partnership

# Structure of presentation

- 1. Management trends in voluntary organisations**
- 2. Common symptoms of management problems**
- 3. Different perspectives on management**
- 4. Unique challenge of managing campaigning organisations**
- 5. Balancing campaigning and organisation development**
- 6. Characteristics of successful campaigning organisations**



# History of management of voluntary organisations

## Moving from:

- Large governing councils
- Many committees
- General Secretary
- Flat structures
- Few structured processes
- Massive over-commitment

## Moving to:

- Small boards
- More task groups
- Chief Executives
- Small teams
- Clear management processes
- Work plans and time budgets



# Symptoms of poor management

**High staff turnover**

**Ill defined pay systems**

**Back biting**

**Frustrated Staff**

**Too many priorities**

**People not held accountable**

**No success measures**

**Plans not achieved**

**Everyone involved in everything**

**Meetings over-run**

**Little Professional Development**

**People taken for granted**

**Unclear roles**



# Different perspectives on management

## The constraining view

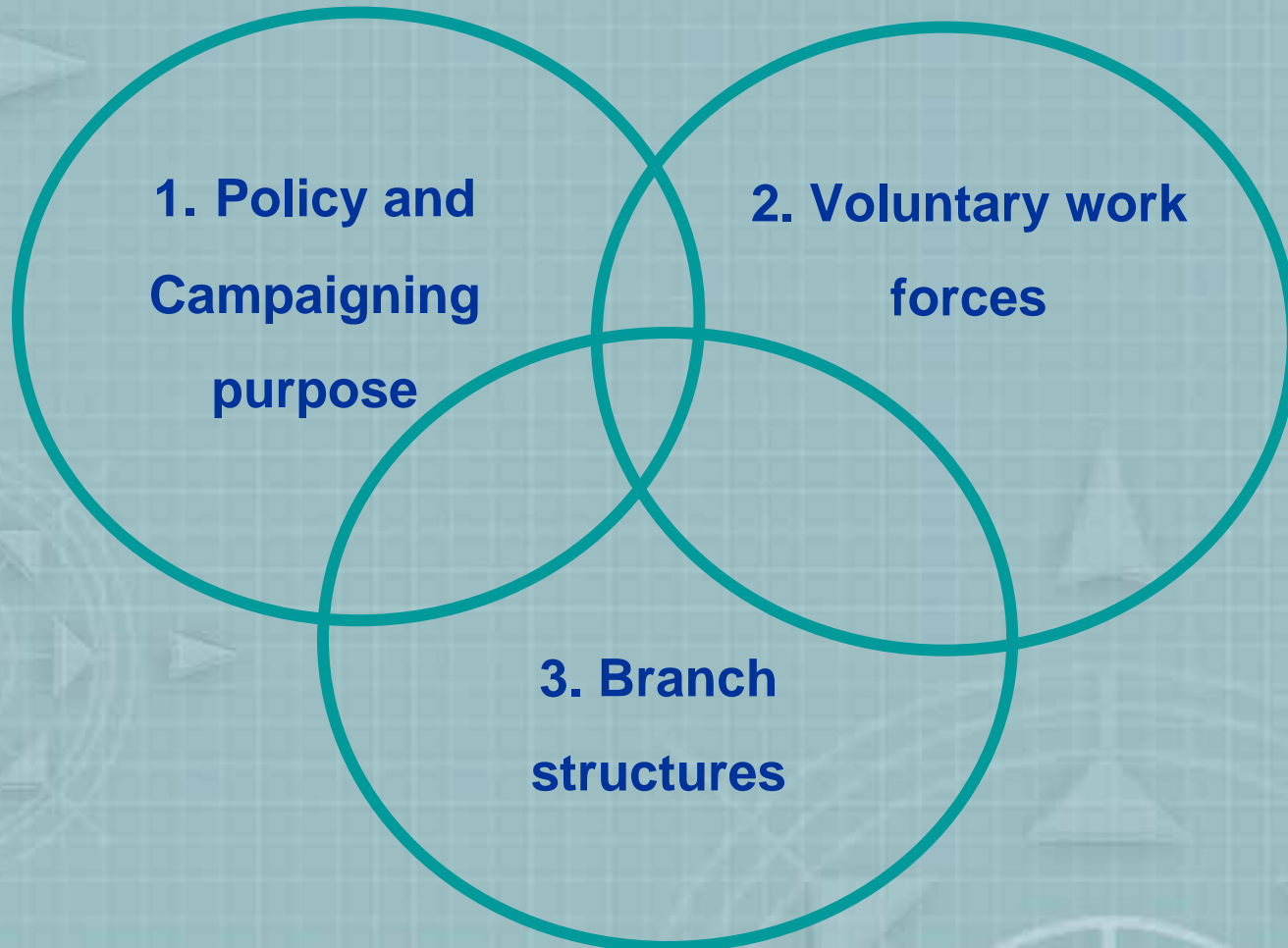
- Management is hierarchical
- Necessary but not appreciated
- Assumes 'business' values
- Oppressive
- Puts people in boxes

## The enabling view

- Team based and cross functional
- Respected and adds value
- Tailored for 'our' organisation
- Supportive
- Creates opportunities and space for people to deliver



# Unique management challenges of campaigning organisations



# 1. Special challenges managing campaigning organisations

## Externally

**Rapidly changing environment**

**Need to have campaign strategies and be opportunistic**

## Internally

**Campaigners not team players**

**Little management experience**

**Work for cause, not for the job**

**Charismatic and individualistic staff**

**No easy ways to establish priorities**

**No management training**



## 2. Special challenges managing voluntary work force

- **Communicating with wide range of people with different interests**
- **Seeing the organisation from volunteers' perspectives**
- **Maintaining motivation and commitment**
- **Appropriate involvement in policy making and management**



### 3. Special challenges managing branch structures

- **Need for two way flow of ideas, energy and communications**
- **Total clarity over roles and expectations of branches, regions and centre**
- **Strong support systems for branch leaders**



# Distinct mind-sets required

## Political mind-set

Energetic campaigns  
Nimble organisation  
Flexible teams  
Flat structure  
Creative skills  
Short time horizons

**A 'web' organisation**

## Managerial mind-set

Build organisation  
Strategically planned  
Fixed teams  
More hierarchical  
Operational skills  
Long time horizons

**Line management**



# To managerial

## Campaign mind-set

Lacklustre campaigns  
Select wrong  
campaign issues  
Poor media  
coverage  
Star campaigners  
leave

## Managerial mind-set

Strategically planned  
Good internal  
communications  
and relationships  
Good team  
working  
Investment in people  
development



# Too focussed on campaigns

## Campaign mind-set

Great campaigns  
Good media coverage  
High profile for key people

## Managerial mind-set

Membership poorly serviced  
Little integration of regional and national effort  
Fundraising opportunities not exploited



# Integrating both perspectives

- **Both Political and Managerial mindsets are essential**
- **CEO and Executive Team need integrated overview**
- **Managers must demonstrate understanding and respect for both mind sets**



# Characteristics of successful campaigning organisations

- **Small and effective Executive Team**
- **Creative campaign strategies**
- **Plans to build organisation capacity**
- **Close Chair - Chief Executive relationship**
- **Distinguish governance and management**
- **Mutual respect of campaigning and management roles**
- **Investment in supporting, developing and coaching individuals**
- **Total clarity about roles and responsibilities**



## Compass Partnership books:

***Managing Without Profit***, Mike Hudson, (DSC, 2000) sets out the theory and practice of creating highly successful nonprofit organisations.

***Managing at the Leading Edge***, Mike Hudson, (DSC, 2003) describes what can be learned from the management and governance of nonprofit organisations in the USA.

Both are available from [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk)

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