TURN UP THE HEAT: ACTION THERMOMETER

Don’t bring out your big guns right away. Start with an easy activity and get lots of people to participate. If that doesn’t succeed, gradually increase the intensity of your actions, but make sure you don’t leave people behind by escalating too quickly.

One way to visualize escalating tactics is to arrange them on a thermometer, with each action “hotter” than the last. For instance, here are the steps a group of New Haven teachers took to solve the mold problem at their school, beginning from the bottom of the thermometer:

14. Walked out of a meeting en masse
13. Spoke to the media
12. Pulled a publicity stunt
11. Called a meeting of supporters
10. Used the result to formulate specific demands, with deadlines
  9. Filed an information request
  8. Reached out to parents
  7. Published a newsletter
  6. Formed a grievance committee
  5. Developed a communication network
  4. Conducted a health survey
  3. Gathered signatures on a grievance
  2. Defined their issue: air quality
  1. Met as a small group