



ADVICE

Managing Morale in the Midst of a Long-Term Animal Rights Campaign

Prolonged animal rights campaigns naturally generate significant amounts of anxiety. Even in large organizations, staff morale can quickly decline due to the stress caused by long-term animal rights challenges. Therefore, here are a few tips from AMP aimed at managing morale during a prolonged campaign.

Keep staff informed

One major reason why morale can suffer during an animal rights campaign is the feeling amongst staff that more could be done to fight back. However, in many cases, communicators and administrators are working overtime to defend the organization and correct false claims. This is why internal communications are crucial when an institution is the longtime target of an animal rights group. Consider holding staff meetings to discuss the claims and what the organization is doing to defend itself and its employees. Also, recognize that staff also serve as ambassadors, meaning that they can often use advice in responding to questions from friends and neighbors when negative accusations are leveled.

Consider whether staff can assist in the defense

If your organization is falsely accused, consider whether staff can help out. For example, could the organization hold a press conference where animal care leadership or key staff share information about the extensive efforts taken daily to provide excellent animal care? Would some employees be interested in writing a letter to the editor to help set the record straight? Getting staff involved can be very effective. It can also positively impact morale.

If individual employees are being targeted, offer them tools and advice

At times, individual scientists or other employees are demonized by animal rights groups. In these cases, assist those who are targeted in addressing concerns. Security staff might be able to provide assistance in making sure local police are aware of the names and addresses of employees who may be the target of home protests or harassment. Try to proactively address concerns and answer questions before they arise. Providing staff with a sense of security demonstrates an organization's commitment to its employees. It also reduces stress.