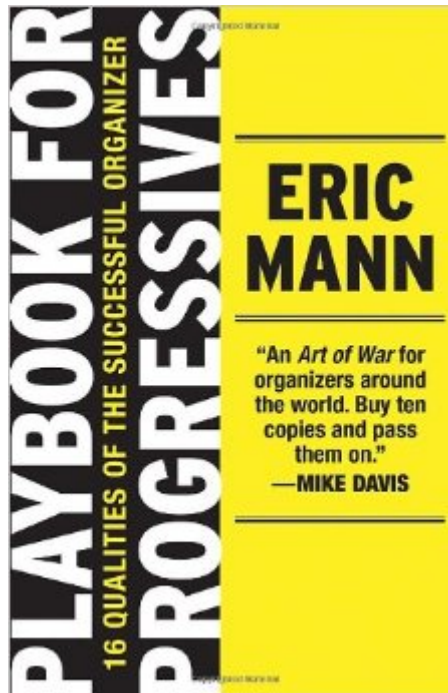


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# Playbook For Progressives: 16 Qualities Of The Successful Organizer



## Synopsis

An organizing manifesto for the twenty-first century, *Playbook for Progressives* is a must-have for the activist's tool kit. This comprehensive guide articulates pragmatically what is required in the often mystifying and rarely explained on-the-ground practice of organizing. Here, Eric Mann distills lessons he learned from over forty years as an organizer, as well as from other organizers within the civil rights, labor, LGBT, economic justice, and environmental movements.

## Book Information

Paperback: 232 pages

Publisher: Beacon Press (August 9, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 080704735X

ISBN-13: 978-0807047354

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

Eric Mann's *Playbook for Progressives* is two books in one. The book wouldn't work any other way. Mann is true to his title and introduction, presenting a 74-page section on the roles of an organizer. Included in this section are 12 specific yet overlapping responsibilities that are representative of political organizers -- foot soldier, evangelist, recruiter, group builder, strategist, tactician, communicator, political educator, agitator, fundraiser, comrade & confidante, and cadre. The second section of the book, "16 Qualities of a Successful Organizer," takes the roles of the first section further by building on the earlier descriptions with substantive portraits of *strategy and tactics* that are crucial for successful radical, political, organizing. *Playbook for Progressives* is not two books because it includes distinct sections, but rather because Mann combines theory and action, with biography and autobiography, to bring alive, through real lives, what radical organizing means in the struggle against racism and class disparity in the United States and throughout the world. Eric Mann one of the founders the Labor/Community Strategy Center (LCSC) in 1989, has been the

organization's Director since its inception. His earlier political work included being a Field Secretary for The Congress of Racial Equality, an aboveground member of Weatherman, and a radical, activist/organizer in automobile and airplane production plants throughout the country. Many of the examples of radical organizing in the book are the stories of Mann and other organizers at LCSC. Mann explains in the introduction of *Playbook for Progressives* that the organization was launched as "an experiment to reassert the powerful, positive impact of progressive ideology and transformative organizing."

Back in the 1960s, I remember having tremendous respect for veteran communists and socialists of earlier eras. I also thought they were a bunch of old geezers who spoke a funny language of class warfare. What was the relevance of "workers of the world unite" when we were dealing with African American, women's and gay rights? I suspect that today's Occupy movement looks at the 1960s Old Geezers with a similar combination of awe and contempt. They might want to read *Playbook for Progressives*. In this new book, veteran 60s organizer Eric Mann lays out his critique of modern capitalism and a vision of how to change it. He calls his method "transformative organizing," which he describes as changing both society and the organizer. Mann combines specific organizing techniques with anecdotes from his long history as a civil rights, union and community organizer. Through no fault of their own, many young activists who occupied Zuccotti Park in New York or Oscar Grant Plaza in Oakland are cut off from the history of earlier social movements. As it turns out, however, many of the debates communicated with "mic checks" in the parks today echo those of the 1960s: There are no leaders. Mann shows that people are disgusted with opportunistic and self serving leaders. But real leaders always emerge from grass roots movements; they should be supported. Participatory democracy. Today's movements reject elections that are rigged in favor of the ultra-rich. Democratic decision making from below is a viable alternative. But endless meetings and seeking unanimous consensus isn't democracy either. Electoral politics, when led by genuine progressives, can have a positive impact. Building a multinational movement.

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