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Michael Pertschuk served as chairman of the Federal Trade Commission from 1977 to 1981, and he co-founded the Advocacy Institute. He is the author of *Smoke in Their Eyes: Lessons in Movement Leadership from the Tobacco Wars* (also published by Vanderbilt) and many other books.

“Read this and don your armor.”—Robert Reich

The DeMarco Factor

Transforming Public Will into Political Power

MICHAEL PERTSCHUK

Vinny DeMarco might be a latter-day Don Quixote except that he tilts his lance at real obstacles to social justice: lobby-locked state legislatures and Congress, stonewalling the public will. In twenty years of organizing campaigns in Maryland, he has led successful efforts to pass gun control laws (against National Rifle Association opposition), to hike cigarette taxes to prevent youth smoking, and to extend health care to hundreds of thousands of low-income workers. He has also built a unique alliance of mainstream and conservative faith groups, which helped secure rare bipartisan votes in Congress for the enactment in July 2009 of landmark FDA regulation of tobacco manufacture and marketing.

DeMarco's unique strategic template includes momentum-building stages over a multiyear campaign; unrelenting, skillful access to the media for engaging public support; coalitions of hundreds, even thousands, of faith, community, labor, public health, and business groups; and a hard press on candidates to support legislation before elections, rather than after they are comfortably in office. As an organizer/leader, DeMarco also succeeds in his campaigns through force of personality: his unquenchable exuberance and idiosyncrasies delight and madden his opponents—sometimes his allies, too.

Michael Pertschuk, himself a veteran advocate, here chronicles three of DeMarco's campaigns, each facing a different obstacle course. His deep analysis draws out strategic and leadership lessons that engaged citizens and advocates for popular causes stonewalled by powerful lobbies can put to immediate and practical use.

“Michael Pertschuk has spent his life battling for ordinary Americans against the moneyed interests in Washington—and, along the way, has energized and mobilized countless numbers of ordinary Americans for that same battle. It's the only hope we have. Read this and don your armor.”—**Robert Reich**

“I have known and worked with Vinny DeMarco for more than twenty-five years. In all that time he has been motivated by an unflinching passion for justice combined with an extraordinary ability to make others want to join him in action to achieve justice. They trust him because they know he's in it for the long haul, not just the day. He will do most of the work, then give them all the credit. His deep knowledge of history, which he never displays, guides him and helps make him a true leader. The lively campaign stories in this book capture the essence of that leadership.”—**Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, former Maryland Lieutenant Governor**

“When it comes to the science and art of media advocacy—approaching the media in ways that propel your issue forward—Vinny DeMarco has ‘written the book.’ Except that Vinny has shown us all how it's done, and Mike Pertschuk has written the book. From his varied and exquisitely sensitive uses of carefully wrought polling to gaining the trust and access to the media; from inventing newsworthy events to making certain that the coverage of those events broadcasts his core messages to legislators, Vinny, in the book, demonstrates how it's done right, and Mike Pertschuk wraps it up in a lively package that both delights and teaches us. No advocate who wants to make change happen can afford to miss *The DeMarco Factor*.”—**Celinda Lake, progressive pollster; President, Lake Research**

“My old adversary, the National Rifle Association, spends millions of dollars on slick campaigns and has lobbyists in \$4,000 suits, but Vinny beats them with pocket change while wearing a Winnie-the-Pooh tie. Would-be advocates for the public interest and frustrated citizens who fear they don't have a voice will take heart from this book and learn not to fear the most powerful lobbies and beat them instead.”—**Sarah Brady**



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