

Effective Advocacy Strategies

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Overview

- About Advocacy Solutions®
- Foundation of advocacy
- How to develop an effective advocacy plan



Advocacy Solutions®

ADVOCACY
SOLUTIONS®

- Business committed to *providing a voice* to organizations and individuals through the development and implementation of impactful advocacy strategies
- Three core services:
 - Training and development
 - Creation of strategic plans
 - Implementation of strategies



Providing A Voice®

What is Advocacy?

ADVOCACY
SOLUTIONS®



Providing A Voice®

Why is Advocacy Important?

- Key decision makers react to those credible groups or individuals who most effectively bring their issues to the forefront of the public agenda (or shape the agenda itself)
- Governments have competing interests and concerns (including their own priorities)
- If you don't engage, someone else will
- You have the power to affect change around your issues (read: voters, taxpayers)



Different Kinds of Advocacy

- Personal vs. issue-based
- Personal – presenting issues to key decision-makers that are having a specific impact on you or your loved ones – tend to be narrowly focused
- Issue-based – presenting issues to key decision-makers on behalf of a larger group of affected people – tend to be broadly applicable



The Essence of Good Advocacy

- Identify and be able to explain your issues (messages) using the tools at your disposal
- Know your issues better than anyone in government (beware of the Curse of Knowledge)
- Be able to position your issues so that they fit within the government's agenda and election cycle, or be able to set a new agenda
- Build on existing relationships with policy influencers, or create new relationships



Knowing Your Issues

- You need to demonstrate that you know your issues and core facts, in a manner that is 'consumable' to decision-makers
- Be able to discuss your issues in the context of a story, using examples of real people (like yourselves or the people you represent) who are being impacted
- Ideally, if you are advocating to a politician, your examples will incorporate constituent concerns or reflect their personal interests



Finding Others Who Know Your Issues

- People who are impacted by the issues and can articulate their stories
- Experts in the field, who can speak to the complexities of the matter
- People who have dealt with the issues in another jurisdiction or under similar circumstances previously
- Other people in government i.e. local MPP/MLA/MNA/MHA



Build on Existing Relationships

- At the heart of effective advocacy is impeccable relationships with key people in government
- Look for people in your organization or network who have established relationships with the people you need to see
- Go beyond your business circles to find connections, and use these links to secure introductions



When You Have No Relationships?

- Make an appointment to visit your local elected representatives ie. on constituency days
- Invite local politicians to your events
- Communicate with them consistently about what you are doing ie. newsletters
- Offer to support them in their work, by building opportunities for them to get their messages out to constituents ie. town hall meetings



When You Have No Relationships?

- Offer to provide them with information or other resources that may be of assistance
- Ask them to provide you with key introductions to others in government
- Go to local events where you know policy influencers will be in attendance
- Become active with riding level political parties



Process for Developing an Effective Advocacy Plan

- Identify your issues
- Test and frame your issues
- Key message development
- Development of your tools
- Development of your one 'ask'



Identify Your Issues

- Initial question – what are the problems, concerns, challenges that we face as a group?
- Try to articulate the answer to this question for as many issues as you can identify
- Not all issues lend themselves to advocacy
- TEST – can the objective be achieved through advocacy and can a target be identified



Test and Frame Your Issues

- Find out what matters to the people that you represent (will help to frame the issues)
 - members surveys (mail, fax, on-line)
 - round table discussions
 - informal conversations
 - focus group/public opinion poll
- FRAMING - what aspect of the identified issues do you want to focus on initially
- DECISION – which of the framed issues are you going to build your first advocacy campaign around?



Key Message Development

Identification...

- Requires that you be able to take an array of information and distill it down to its simplest form
- Requires that you separate fact from fiction
- When advocating on behalf of a group, consensus on the issues is required



Key Message Development

Framing...

- Develop 3 key messages that explain the salient points of your issue in simple language
- Each one should be 25 words or less
- Must always be clear, compelling, concise and consistent
- Practice presenting your 3 key messages to someone who has no knowledge of your issues



A Model For Developing Key Messages

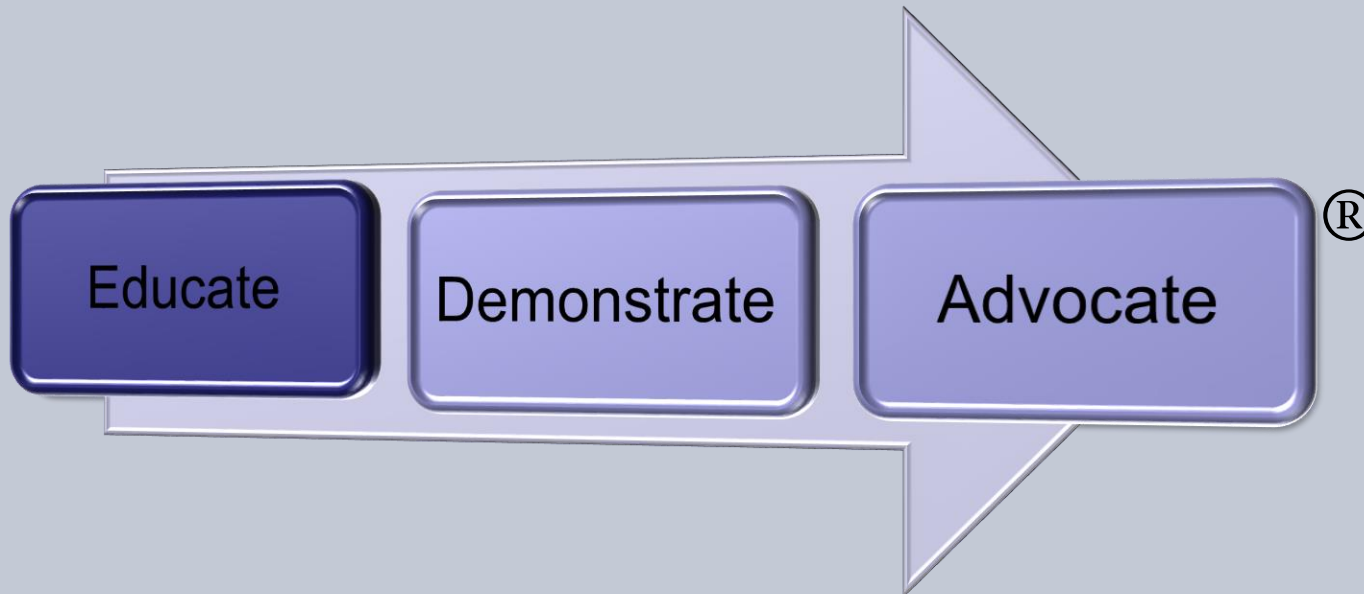
1. What is the problem?
2. What is the impact of the problem?
3. What would it look like if we solved/didn't solve the problem?



Advocacy Tools

The means of delivering the messages...

As a process, three steps must be followed regardless of the tool being utilized to get to advocacy stage:



Advocacy Tools

- Web site
- Newsletter
- In person meeting
- Telephone call
- Voice mail information
- Letter/e-mail/text
- Direct mail campaign
- Advocacy Day



Advocacy Tools

- Brochure
- Fact sheet
- News release
- Newspaper/periodical article/op editorial/PSA/advertorial
- Published book
- Information session
- E-advocacy
- Social networking tools



Your One 'Ask'

The objective or goal of the strategy...

- **ONE** – because you are going to ask for what you need, not a list of what you want
- Requires one to make choices and potentially reach a consensus (just as it does when developing your 3 key messages)
- Sometimes opportunities will present themselves that will make the 'ask' very timely



Implementing an Effective Advocacy Strategy

- Success will depend in large part on the ability of people like yourselves to become engaged
- You all live in various ridings throughout the region/province/country
- You are inherently credible sources of information and opinion
- You are most effective at the telling of your personal stories (and the stories of those whom you represent)



Summary

- Know your core facts as organizations
- Know your key messages
- Deliver your key messages over and over, using all of your tools
- Ask for the one thing you need, not a list of what you want
- Build impeccable, long-term relationships
- Tell the personal stories of people impacted
- Government wins, when you give up...so **never give up**



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