Engaging Allies for Public Data: A Roadmap for a Successful Advocacy Campaign

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By the end of this presentation you’ll...

- Know the difference between education, advocacy and lobbying
- Understand the tools at your disposal and how/when to use them
- Have a framework to develop an advocacy strategy
Advocacy ≠ Not Lobbying

• Education: sharing information about a problem and policy options to solve it

• Advocacy: Actively asking policymakers to fix a problem and/or recommending a policy solution

• Lobbying: Strict legal, IRS definitions
  – Asking policymakers to act on specific legislation
  – Asking others to ask the same

**Note! Lobbying doesn’t make you a lobbyist**
Advocacy Strategy: Set Goals

• What problem are you trying to address?
• What are the long-term objectives of your campaign?
• What constitutes a “win?”
  – What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal?
Advocacy Strategy: Resources

• What resources (e.g., money, staff, reputation) can you/your organization bring to the table?
• In what ways could you/your organization be strengthened (e.g., raise more money, personal recognition)?
• What limitations need to be addressed for the campaign to succeed?
Advocacy Strategy: Stakeholders

• Who cares about this issue enough to join cause?
  – Who will be most helpful in advancing the agenda?
  – Who will resonate most with your target audience?

• Who must you engage in/inform about the cause to succeed?

• Who are your opponents?
  – What will your victory cost them?
  – How strong/organized are they?
  – What will they do/spend to stop you?
Advocacy Strategy: Engaging Allies

• Champions
  – Policymakers who can influence colleagues

• Grasstops
  – Powerful influencers (e.g., CEO, community leaders, donors)

• Grassroots
  – The masses

• Coalitions
  – Multiple individuals/organizations working together toward common goal
Advocacy Strategy: Targets (i.e., audience)

• **Who are the primary targets (i.e., policymakers)?**
  – Who has power to give you what you want?
  – What power/influence do you have over them?

• **Who are the secondary targets (i.e., allies, constituents, media)?**
  – Who has power over the people with the power to give you what you want?
  – What power/influence do you have over them?
Advocacy Strategy: Tactics

• What will you do to influence targets?
  – Note: tactics will vary depending on the target!

• Tactics should be:
  – In context
  – Flexible and creative
  – Make sense to your constituents and allies
Tactics: How to Engage

• Direct connect
  – Meetings
  – Town halls/coffees
  – Hearings
  – Events, rallies, site visits

• Indirect connect
  – Social & traditional media
  – Official comments

• Contributions
  • Monetary & in-kind (e.g., volunteer on campaign)
Case Study: NDD United

• **Goal: Stop cuts to domestic programs, increase spending**
  – Short-term victory: create identity for “NDD”
  – Short-term victory: stop sequestration
  – Short-term victory: prevent more cuts
  – Short-term victory: change narrative
Case Study: NDD United

• Resources
  – Committed, connected volunteers from reputable organizations with grassroots
  – Compelling data/stories to share
  – Engaged champions
  – No funding
    • Fundraising campaign needed (organizational sponsorships, foundation grants)
Case Study: NDD United

• Stakeholders
  – Champions: Appropriators, Cabinet Secretaries, Democrats, Defense hawks
  – Allies/Constituents: Any/all organizations/individuals who care about appropriations
  – Opponents: Fiscal hawks
Case Study: NDD United

• Targets
  – Primary: House/Senate leaders, White House
  – Secondary: Cabinet officials, unions, defense industry, business leaders
Case Study: NDD United

• Tactics
  – Shareable videos, one-pagers, and infographics
  – Data/stories to document impact of cuts (www.raisethecaps.org)
  – Congressional briefings, rallies, press conferences
  – Op Eds, press releases, media interviews
  – “Tweet Days” (#CutsHurt, #RaiseTheCaps)
    • Memes, video testimonials
  – Hill Days (with hats!)
  – Sign on letters to Congress
Case Study: NDD United

• Results
  – Secured partial, temporary sequestration relief through Bipartisan Budget Acts of 2013, 2015, 2018
    • Named Top 10 Lobbying Victory of 2013 by The Hill
    • BBA of 2018 largest funding increase since 2009 stimulus
  – Prevented further cuts to domestic programs
  – Changed the conversation about “nondefense discretionary” spending
  – Made #RaiseTheCaps a “thing”
  – Built a recognizable brand for NDD United
Questions?