

The Key Components for Building Power to Change Public Policy

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President



You Build Power By:

- Speaking with **ONE VOICE**...have a clear agenda and targeted policy “asks”
- Developing thoughtful strategy—and sticking to it! **DISCIPLINE!!**
- **Investing** in your advocacy operations
 - Playing to your strengths—building capacity, leveraging your grassroots/tops, the press and emerging political opportunities
- **Starting early** in the legislative/regulatory process and realizing progress often takes a long time (as in several Congresses)
 - Playing for the long term, but marking interim wins
 - Building relationships with members and staff is critical...find win/wins!
- **Being Persistent**...“Follow Up is the Chariot of Genius”

Speaking with One Voice Maximizes Your Power

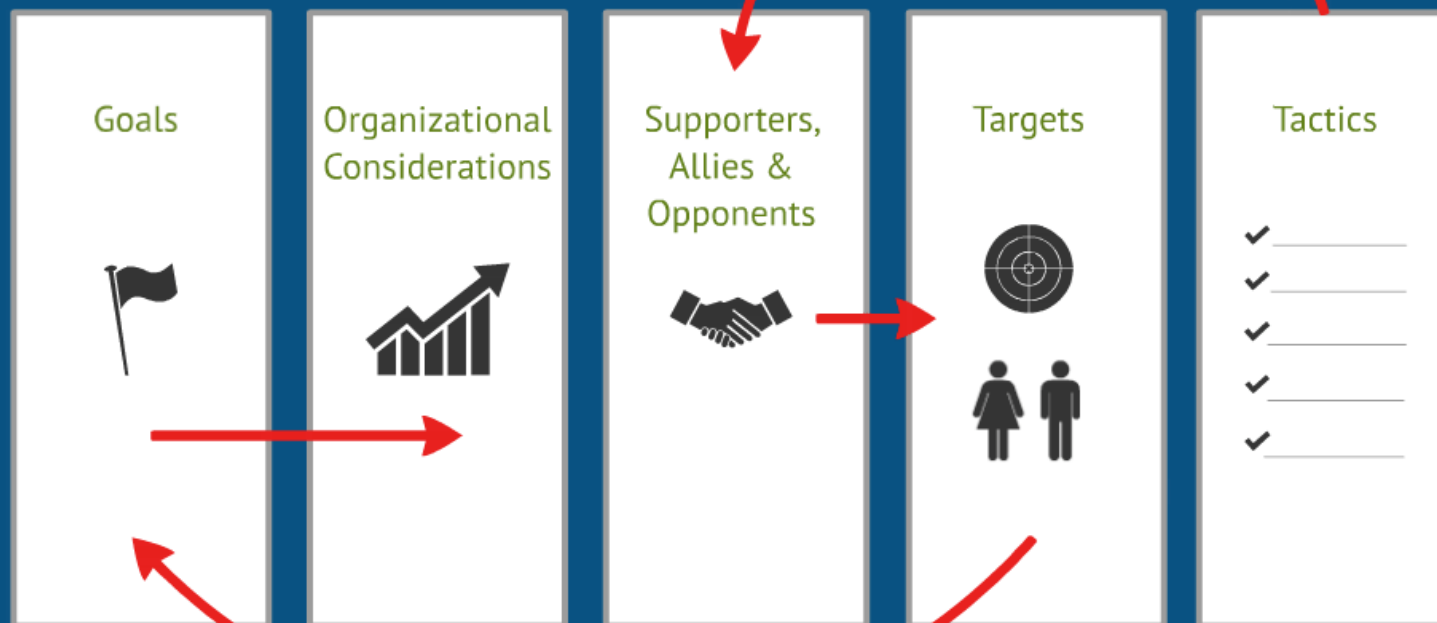
- Clarity in your policy “asks” is critical to success—it’s fundamental to everything that follows!
- The American Cancer Society had a big agenda...literally “curing cancer.” This was both a blessing and a curse.
 - Need to FOCUS on a few things and stay disciplined...don’t chase “shiny objects” or have too many “asks”
 - Narrowing the agenda...what can policymakers act on? What’s ripe? What’s politically possible?
- The Power of Coalitions--One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC)—Coalition of 40 cancer organizations focused on appropriations
 - Works out agenda and disputes internally
 - United voice on Capitol Hill
 - Over 20 years of success fighting for more funding for cancer research and programs

Smart Strategy Is Critical for Building Power

- Far too many groups focus on tactics and not a long-term strategy—**Be proactive, not reactive**
- You need to define your goals FIRST, and then develop allies, targets and tactics
 - Long Term Goals
 - Mid Term Goals
 - Short Term Goals
- Midwest Academy Strategy Chart is a great tool...it's all about power relationships

Direct Action Organizing (DAO) Strategy Chart

| Goals | Organizational Considerations | Constituents, Allies, and Opponents | Targets | Tactics |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> List the long-term objectives of your campaign. State the intermediate goals for this issue campaign. What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. List the specific ways in which you want your organization to be strengthened by this campaign. List internal problems that have to be considered if the campaign is to succeed. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization? Who are your opponents? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who has the power to give you what you want? What power do you have over them? Secondary Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who has power over the people with the power to give you what you want? What power do you have over them? | <p>For each target, list the tactics that each constituent group can best use to make its power felt.</p> <p>Tactics must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In context. Flexible and creative. Directed at a specific target. Make sense to the membership. <p>Tactics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media events Public hearings Voter registration and education Lawsuits Elections |



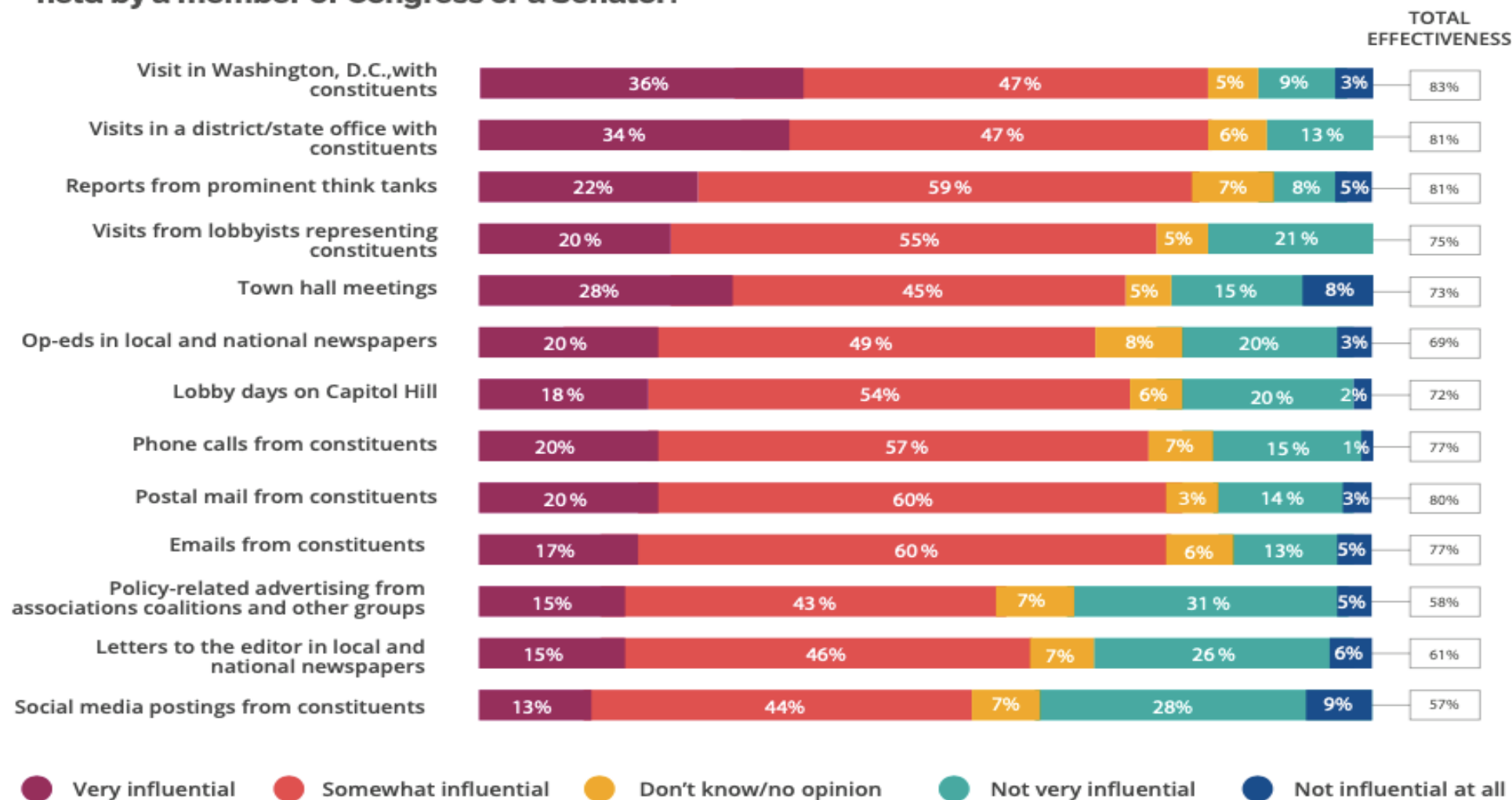
Effective Advocacy Requires Investments

- Use the strategy chart to figure out your strengths, your resources, and your shortcomings/vulnerabilities
- Beefing up your advocacy capacity pays dividends (staffing, training, organizing your grassroots and grasstops)
- It doesn't have to be a movement of millions...usually it's a movement of thousands or even hundreds...who are really well organized!!
- Be thoughtful in deploying your resources—don't take a shotgun approach. Targeting and persistence are critical success factors.

Grassroots/Grasstops—Makes You More Powerful!

- Politics is ultimately about relationships and power dynamics
- Members care deeply about what their voters think
- Effective organizations build deep relationships with Members and their staffs
- Movement of Hundreds or Thousands vs. Movement of Millions
- But grassroots/grasstops must be effectively deployed...use the right tool at the right time on the right people

How influential are the following types of communication on the legislative position held by a member of Congress or a Senator?



Source: Congressional Management Foundation

Start Early, Mark Incremental Success, and Recognize It's a Long Haul

- Making legislation is a process—don't show up at the end and think you're going to get a result



- This whole process can take years to get a result
 - Get involved early & stick to your strategy
 - Celebrate interim successes/adjust for failures
 - Be persistent (without being a pest)

Be Reasonable and Thoughtful

- Think about your audience—it's not what you need, it's what they need! The two must converge.
- BE SPECIFIC AND CONCISE—it's **your** job to create the solution to your problem, **not** the Member or Administrator's job. Make it easy for them to say yes.
- Be Reasonable with the number of things you ask for!

Be Flexible and Listen

- Be Flexible—you may have an idea, but LISTEN carefully for their feedback and adjust accordingly
- Think about (in advance) the barriers that office would face if they support you—who will oppose the effort (home state interests? party interests? etc.)
- Offer specific resources to help them accomplish your goal—it's your job to help get the legislation passed (or regulation)

Be Honest and Straightforward

- You're in a long-term relationship, not a one-night stand
- It takes time to build trust, don't break it
- Know when to agree to disagree (pleasantly)
- Know the weaknesses of your own case and be prepared to address them proactively-- It's better that you frame the case yourself than allowing your opponents to do so

Have good, useful and UNIQUE information

- Information is truly power
- Good data (studies) can be critical to helping to cement impressions or change opinions:
 - Smoking decreases when tobacco taxes go up...and here's the revenue you can generate
 - Business is not hurt by smoke-free laws
 - People are dying needlessly from cancer because they can't access care
- Tell them something they don't already know

Maximize Each Interaction

- Office Visits—Plan them, Practice and LISTEN
- Make a real “ask”: Don’t waste their time!!
- FOLLOW UP after the meeting
- District Events/Meetings are underutilized
 - Site Visits—Very powerful
 - Town Halls
 - District Offices
- Local Press and Social Media Matters — A LOT
- Engage Important Validators (especially those that know the Member)
- Thanking and Spanking

Be aware of the political and external factors that are affecting the legislative/regulatory process—it is not happening in a vacuum (this is both an opportunity and challenge)

**“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”
Seneca**

“Follow up is the Chariot of Genius”

- It’s amazing how many people would come and have a meeting but never follow up. As a staffer that was my favorite kind of meeting.
- Be persistent without being a pest!!
- Critical success factors:
 - Focus & Discipline—Speaking with One Voice
 - Smart Strategy
 - Invest in your Advocacy Infrastructure: Staff and Grassroots/Grasstops
 - Build Real Relationships with Policymakers
 - Follow Up and Persistence

Questions and Discussion

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