

Advocacy & Lobbying 101

Jack Shaner, Enviroscience

Jack demonstrated how to effectively lobby. Lobbying is education, persuasion, and empathy to get support from legislators, mayors, agency staff and other leaders (“targets”) who can make policy changes. Leaders are all political animals who will respond to lobbying. Before the presentation, Jack worked the room by asking participants where they were from and shook hands. Jack used video clips, individual stories and audience participation to teach the audience. He uses a similar approach with targets, and learns what matters to them. Citizen lobbyists can leverage empathy of the targets by using the stories of people impacted by a policy. Tell the story by bringing someone impacted or use videos, sounds and/or graphics. It also is effective to state that an organization or diverse constituent group supports this policy change. Personal meetings, phone calls and postcards work. To summarize, leaders make decisions with emotions and justify them with facts. Do the work for them to sell your issue, but avoid TMI (too much information). Begin meetings by making target of your lobbying feel important by asking where they are from and understand how they think. Learn age, family background, religion, employment, home community, schooling, voting record, and other personal information. Use facts and emotion to make your case. Bring a person impacted to your meeting. Find out what will make them change their mind. Boil it down. Keep it short. Respectively challenge with facts, but don’t get argumentative. If testifying in legislature, state your main point(s) at the beginning, make your case succinctly and restate your main point(s)end of your presentation. End your meeting or testimony by saying thank you.