



# HOW TO DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY STRATEGY





**PRO-TIP:** Many advocacy efforts are doomed from the beginning because there are no clear missions, goals or objectives. However, when you organize your advocacy campaign like a political campaign, you'll ensure all participants understand its purpose and the roadmap to success.

## DEFINE SUCCESS.

- Are you trying to pass legislation?
- Are you trying to stop legislation?
- Are you trying to amend language in a bill?
- Are you trying to maintain the status quo or shake things up?
- In short, you must have a specific purpose to develop and execute a strategy to accomplish that purpose.

## DEFINE YOUR TARGETS FOR INFLUENCE.

- Who are the key decision-makers?
- To whom do those decision-makers listen?
- What types of communications impact the decision-maker, e.g., one-on-one meetings with constituents? Social media? Phone calls? Emails? Key influencers?

## DEFINE YOUR MESSAGE.

- Why is the cause relevant to a broader audience than your own special interests?
- If your issue is complex, have you made it simple to understand?
- Is your message compelling?

## ARE YOU BUILDING A COALITION OR DOING IT ALONE?

- Coalitions can be a powerful tool to demonstrate broad support. But without clear objectives, a coalition can become unwieldy or even paralyzed among competing agendas.
- Does the coalition have a single spokesperson to ensure it speaks with one voice?

## ONCE YOU HAVE DEFINED SUCCESS, YOUR OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS, NOW YOU NEED A PLAN.

- If it's not on paper ... it's not a plan.
- A plan requires buy-in by all the stakeholders, especially in a coalition. A written document ensures that everyone is looking at the same roadmap and not just hearing what they want to hear.

## BE PREPARED TO PIVOT AND ADAPT.

- Just like a political campaign, things can change quickly in the legislative environment, so your effort needs to be nimble and you need to act accordingly.
- Legislative targets may change as you gain or lose support.
- Update your messaging with current events and intel.

**REMEMBER:** Legislators are busy people. Your issue is not their problem ... until you make it their problem, which means you have to demonstrate that their constituents care about your issue.

