



Successfully Working with Coalitions for Advocacy

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Ted Mowatt, CAE - Wanner Associates, Inc.

Judy Eschberger, Esq. – JAE Government Relations



What's Under the Dome Can Be Intimidating

- **Recognize that you're one of many**
- **Figure out how to get your message heard, understood and acted upon**

Assessing What You've Got

- In the beginning...
 - No contract lobbyist for association
 - In house grassroots coordination and government relations
 - Varying degrees of grassroots activity by members
 - Varying opinions around how much time association (and its members) should spend on GR
 - Some members DID have contract lobbyists for their own organizations
 - Significant challenges on the horizon: Department policies, regulations, budget issues

What we had...



What we wanted...



Develop an Advocacy Council to Grow Your GR Resources

▪ The Basic Idea

- Coordinated use of association GR resources, members and members' contract lobbyists**

- Council would consist executives from member organizations who currently employ or retain registered lobbyists**

- Mission-driven**

- Unified strategies and talking points built on strengths and relationships of Council participants**

- Council is a think tank, and serves as advisors to the Board of Directors**

- Works in concert with other association workgroups like Communications Collaborative**

Getting Your Issue On “The List”

- **How to Get There?**

- **Talked with other associations**

- How do you manage your advocacy?**

- **Talked with some lobbyists**

- What do you think works?**

- What’s comfortable for you?**

- **Discussed with our Board**

- Concerns**

- Assurances**

How Will the Advocacy Council work?

Association Perspective

- Members were excited!
- Collaboration is great
- A chance to fully explain nuances of policy and funding implications
- Lobbyists will manage strategy. They'll take care of everything

Lobbyist Perspective

- Varying degrees of willingness
- Who's in charge here?
- Please just tell us what you need
- OK, but please specifically tell us what you need

Understanding That You REALLY Only Get One “Ask”

- **Figure Out What Your Needs Are**
- **Prioritize your needs**
- **Develop a one pager**
- **A picture paints a thousand words**
- **Make visits with other members of the council**
- **Be ready to defend it and answer questions**

Be Flexible

Learning along the way

- Restructured Council meetings to allow for planning with and without lobbyists present
- Created secure web page for Council members and lobbyists to access most up to date talking point
- Developed a Code of Conduct
- Initiated brief weekly stand-up meetings for lobbyists to plan, report and coordinate next steps
- Understood that grassroots activity is still critical. Lobbyists supplement, but can never replace grassroots
- De-brief at the end of the campaign to determine what worked, didn't work and whether to adjust for the next time

One Touch Is Not Enough...

Senate



House



REMEMBER...

You **MUST** be able to count to:

26

102



You Can't Always Get What You Want!

- **But did it work?**

- Significant increases in state budget when other services suffered cuts

- Delayed statewide implementation of a policy proposal

- Proposed budget cut reduced or funding restored

- Changes made to final regulations

Lessons Learned

Still Learning...

- Some members still inexperienced in directing their lobbyists efforts. Association could provide more guidance.
- Don't assume constant communication between members and their lobbyists
- Don't assume lobbyists are aware of other activities, meetings, critical conversations
- Some folks work well with others; others don't
- Needs of client (member) aren't always needs of the field (association)

Lessons Learned - Continued

- **Still Learning...**
 - The association is a facilitator, not a director
 - Association is a subject matter expert, but not THE Expert
 - Never hurts to take a little time to remind Council of its purpose and mission:
 - Why are we doing this?
 - What change do we hope to affect?

CONTACT

Ted Mowatt, CAE

at Wanner Associates, Inc.

- tmowatt@wannerassoc.com
- (717) 236-2050

Judy Eschberger, Esq.

at JAE Government Relations

Jaeschberger@aol.com

(717) 649-1944

QUESTIONS?