



Strategic Communications with Government

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Guidelines for a Successful Meeting

- ▶ Prior to the Meeting
 - ▶ Know who you are meeting with: Familiarize yourself with their bios, and know their names, titles and responsibilities
 - ▶ Know your time limits
 - ▶ Set out your key messages 3 to 5 in writing
 - ▶ Have a clear “ask” or “message” to convey
 - ▶ Prepare speaking notes – key points
 - ▶ Prepare Briefing papers for handout – limit to one page (double sided if possible)
 - ▶ Supporting documents can be provided at the end of the meeting or referenced within the briefing papers

Setting the Team

- ▶ Key Roles – Opener, Spokesperson/s, Note taker, Closer
- ▶ Opener -(open the meeting & introduce your members)
- ▶ Spokesperson -Identify your approach, one speaker or more? Shared sections or messages, key experts?
- ▶ Note taker - Difficult to speak and record actions, provides a record of the meeting, including body language, questions/responses?
- ▶ Closer - To end the meeting, thank the participants, identify any items that require follow up
- ▶ (Smaller teams can perform multiple roles but clear definition of role is required before the meeting)

Starting the Meeting

- ▶ Be prompt and be respectful of their time
- ▶ Put away your phones, place them on silent
- ▶ Be formal in your address to elected officials – “Minister”, or Mr. /Mrs
- ▶ If you have any family, social, business or political ties to the individual mention them at the onset of the meeting
- ▶ Seek to develop a rapport, but be careful about engaging in too much small talk and using up the time
- ▶ Stay on task and on time

The Meeting

- ▶ Introduce the members of your delegation and exchange business cards for follow up.
- ▶ Ensure you capture the names of all participants in the meeting (as additional/unexpected people may be in attendance)
- ▶ Be clear, concise and avoid acronyms and professional lingo
- ▶ While you have key messages to deliver, don't deliver a speech; be sure to allow time for interaction, discussion and questions – watch the body language
- ▶ Don't answer what you don't know. Instead commit to follow up
- ▶ To the extent possible, seek to identify and articulate common ground

Key Messages

- ▶ Be consistent in your message
 - ▶ Speak with one voice
 - ▶ Make sure everyone in the delegation is delivering the same message particularly if multiple spokespersons – Stay on topic
- ▶ Message repetition is critical
 - ▶ Research shows that a person needs to hear the same message 17 times before they remember it
 - ▶ Your goal is to ensure that your audience hears your message and his/her meeting notes record them for their future reference.

Seek Feedback

- ▶ Conclude the meeting by repeating your key messages/ask
- ▶ Identify any follow up items or timeline for another meeting
 - ▶ Name the person identified to follow up and the timeline
- ▶ Ask if the official has any comments or feedback on the messages/asks presented
- ▶ Thank the members for their time

Follow up

- ▶ As soon as possible following the meeting review the notes
- ▶ Discuss the responses received including any body language indicators
- ▶ Identify any areas of strength or weakness in the presentation
- ▶ Is there any opportunity to improve the presentation or follow up on the weakness

Confidential Tables

- ▶ Why are they Used
- ▶ Why is “George” at the table and not “Fred” or “Julia”
- ▶ Maintaining Trust – Confidentiality is Paramount
- ▶ When can the Information be shared?

Dealing with the Future

- ▶ Unknowns
 - ▶ No clear direction for programs, funding amounts, ratios of funding
- ▶ What is Known
 - ▶ Provincial Deficit ~ \$15B
 - ▶ Commitment to reduce the deficit
 - ▶ Looking for efficiencies, partnerships, private sector investment
 - ▶ Consider using financial analysis/cost benefits in submissions
 - ▶ Use statistics to support decisions – stay away from conjecture on non-tangible benefits