



How To Lobby From Your Kitchen Table (Revision date 1-12-2013)

“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

Edmund Burke

Three branches of California State government

In order to be an effective “lobbyist,” you will need to understand the three branches of California State government. (On the national level, it is the same but with different numbers).

- I. Judicial
- II. Legislative
 - a. Senate
 - i. 40 Members
 - ii. 4 Year term
 - b. Assembly
 - i. 80 Members
 - ii. 2 Year term
- III. Executive
- IV. The legislative process
 - a. They come up with an idea
 - i. In California, that is about 2,000 per year.
 - ii. Ways that they can tell us more and more what to do and take away our freedoms.
 - b. Someone decides to “author” the bill and the bill is assigned a number with prefix denoting the house it originated.
 - i. Senate – SB#
 - ii. Assembly – AB#
 - c. First reading
 - i. Is an introduction to the bill to the chamber.
 - ii. Tells the content of the bill in its original form (which usually changes as it goes through committees).
 - d. Committee Hearings

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- i. Each house has a committee that the bill will fall under.
- ii. The committee will conduct “hearings” that determine whether they will debate the bill or not to pass it out of committee.
- e. Repeat the process in the other house
- f. Goes to the floor for both houses to vote
- g. To the governor
 - i. The governor can sign it or veto the bill.
 - ii. If he vetoes it, it either dies or goes back to both houses where a two-thirds vote is required to overturn his veto.

Are you a lobbyist?

Let us define what that is. It is a group of persons engaged in trying to influence legislators or other public officials in favor of a specific cause. It is the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something; a cause, idea or policy.

Kids learn to do this at a young age when they plead their case for a new bike. Women do it when we want a new outfit. Men do it when they want to get a new lawn mower.

It is simply arguing in favor of something that you want and you are willing to show active support. All of us know how to do this on some level.

To be a good lobbyist, you must first know your legislator.

Know your legislator. What is their name? Where is their office? Who is their Chief of Staff?

- o Establish a relationship with him/her and their staff.
- o When you go to see them be prepared
 - Dress is business attire
 - A good first impression is imperative.
 - You will get further looking professional that using a slogan on your t-shirt.
 - Be on time. Punctuality is the value you place on another’s time.
 - Be polite. If you are sarcastic, use name-calling or disrespect, you will have lost your audience before you start.
 - Consider how YOU would want to be talked to by someone who disagrees with you.
 - Tell the truth. Your facts should have been vetted before your meeting. Do not exaggerate or embellish to make your point.
 - Be informed on the topic you wish to discuss. Know why you believe what you believe and you will not be able to be twisted into a philosophical pretzel the first five minutes you are there.
 - Keep it to one topic at a time



Know your opposition.

- If you do not know what the other side is saying, get to know it.

Believe in what your cause is.

- Do not ever go half-hearted. You must be convinced that you are standing on solid ground.
- Understand “why” you believe what you believe. (I know that I say this a lot but it is the best advice I can give anyone on any topic).
- Communicate effectively and confidently.
 - Don't be emotional
 - Don't get angry
 - Don't do name calling
 - Respect the office if you cannot respect the person.
- Negotiate when necessary
- Persevere
 - Don't give up
 - Make a second call
- Thank them
 - For listening to you
 - For their time

What is the most effective way to do citizen lobbying? There is a variety of ways to lobby. Some are more effective than others.

Let us look at your options:

Personal contact

- An in person meeting with your legislator
- If more than one goes, have a lead person
- This is not a time to ask learning questions
- Ask if you can count on his/her vote on your behalf
- Thank him for his time
 - Send a hand written thank you note after the meeting.

Write a letter to the editor

- They read ALL of them. Each aid cuts out every letter to the editor to get a feel what the people are thinking.
- Pic a topic that you feel passionate about (just one at a time).
- Make your letter timely. Do not talk about something that is not current.
- Try to tie your issue to a recent event. Illustrations to make your point are invaluable.
- Be clear and concise and do not ramble on – get to the point.
- Mention elected officials by name.
- Provide your name, phone number, and address if it is required.
- Send your letter to others in your sphere of influence as well.

Call in to talk radio and voice your opinion

- Be prepared and knowledgeable.



- Know your topic before you speak on air.
- Avoid getting into hypotheticals. Just stick with the facts and you will not go wrong.

Attend Town Halls

- Often times, you will get an opportunity to speak to the representative as well as those who oppose your view if they are in attendance.
- Be prepared and have facts to back up your position.

Phone calls

- Call and let them know how you feel about certain legislation.
- Actually, ask them to vote a particular way.
 - If you're calling out of your area and they don't think that they need to listen to you (even though their vote does affect you personally), remind them that you can devote your time, talent and treasure to see to it that they are put out of office in the next election cycle.
- Your phone call represents about 100 people.

Fax

- You use their paper and they do not like that!
- They keep these in storage.
- Tie up their fax line and they do not like that either!
- For some older lobbyists, this is a real fun thing for them.
 - We have a 94-year-old woman in our group who has a group of six other women come to her home once a week. She has her own fax machine and those women write and fax every week.
- They have to document the position that you have taken, no matter where you are from.
- Your fax represents about 100 people.
- Make one point at a time and make your point in the first sentence.

Write a letter

- These letters are also kept for years in their archives.
- They have to document the position that you have taken.
- Your letter represents 1,000 people.
- Make one point at a time and do it in the first sentence.
- Mention elected officials by name
- Write clearly and concisely – do not ramble – get to the point.
- Sign your name and provide your address and phone number.
- Send copies to your sphere of influence

E-mail

- Unfortunately, this is the least effective form of communication.
 - Can be easily deleted so that there is no record of your correspondence.
- Your e-mail only represents about 10 people.
 - Sign your name
 - Use the letter writing guidelines when sending an e-mail



Conclusion:

One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we did not do our homework, that we were not prepared. Unless an individual has trained himself for his chance, the chance will only make him look ridiculous. Your opportunity will be worth as much as the preparation you have put into it.

Remember, it wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.