Building Relationships with Elected Officials: Strategies for Getting to Know Your Elected Officials

The American Association of Museums’ Online Advocacy Training Series, Part 3

Have no fear! We’ll explain muting, Q&A and other details when we start.
Topics

- About the Online Training Session
- Who’s Speaking?
- Welcome from American Association of Museums
- Why Building Relationships Matters
- Five Strategies for Building Long Term Relationships
- Next Steps
About the Online Training Session

- What’s happening?
- Muting
- Q&A
- Recording and Follow-Up Materials
Who’s Speaking?
Welcome from American Association of Museums

Ford Bell: President, American Association of Museums
AAM Membership

Bringing the museum field together to achieve excellence

your
resource
voice
community

individual membership

your
voice
community

institutional membership

your
connection to the world's largest network of museum professionals

industry partner membership
AAM Professional Development

- Live and On-demand Webinars
- Seminars, Workshops, Retreats
- AAM Annual Meeting Career Cafe
- Coming Soon: PD Podcasts!

www.aam-us.org/profed
AAM Annual Meeting
May 23-26, 2010

- Great Networking Opportunities
- Over 160 Educational Sessions
- MuseumExpo
- AAM Career Café™
- NEW! International Track
  (in Mandarin and Spanish)
- NEW! Virtual Conference
  (brought to you by LearningTimes)

www.aam-us.org/am10
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Where are we Starting From?

Let’s go to the polls!
Why Building Relationships Matters: The Chaos in DC

- 10,000 bills introduced
- 4% get through the process
- 147,000 associations trying to get a message across
- Legislators trying to manage every issue under the sun
Why Building a Relationship Matters: The Spectrum of Asks

- **Easy**
  - Will you come to our museum?
  - Low cost
  - Low opposition
  - Self benefit

- **Hard**
  - Will you vote for this controversial bill or expensive program?
  - High cost
  - High opposition
  - Self benefit

- **Medium**
  - Will you make a statement?
  - Some cost
  - Limited opposition
  - Some self benefit
Five Techniques for Building a Relationship

- You Don’t Always Have to Reinvent the Wheel
- Museum Visits
- Participating in Townhall Meetings
- Coalition Building
- Web 2.0 Approaches
Strategy 1: Don’t Reinvent the Wheel!
Strategy 1: How NOT to Reinvent the Wheel

- Add legislators and staff to newsletter lists
- Add press secretary to press release list
- Invite legislators and staff to already planned events (don’t forget the local staff!)
- Ask legislators or staff to speak at planned meetings (board, friends, trustees)
- Let legislators know of any available meeting space for their own events
- Incorporate pictures from events with legislators into your newsletter or on your webpage
Strategy 2: Benefits of Museum Visits

- Home style vs. DC-style
- Makes the issue “real”
- Often easier to get their attention
- Easier for you to arrange
Strategy 2: How to Do Museum Visits

- Know the Legislative Calendar
  - House
  - Senate
- Decide who to invite
- Decide what to show them
- The invitation process
- Who should attend on your end
- Logistics, logistics, logistics
- Recording the event
Strategy 3: Benefits of Townhall Meetings

- Raises your profile
- Increases your credibility
- May get legislators in your door (if you offer meeting space)
- If you engage an elected official, requires them to take a public stance
Strategy 3: How to Engage in Townhall Meetings

- Find out when they are
- Understanding the Audience
- Understanding the Situation
- Develop Your Message
- Following up
Strategy 4: Benefits of Coalition Building

- Ability to focus the message
- Can help you build relationships with your patrons
- Sometimes spreads the work (sometimes creates more!)
Strategy 4: How to Build Coalitions

- Where do we find coalitions?
- Political considerations
- Identify coalition member strengths
  - Message
  - Contacts
  - Advocates
- Coalition member tasks: Being specific is critical
- Timeline for coordination (weekly, monthly, quarterly meetings?)
Coalition Examples

- Brooklyn Botanic Garden, which partnered with recycling programs and the City Dept of Sanitation to encourage recycling in the city and teaching youth about how to recycle and why it matters.

- Long Island Children’s museum model program developed with the state judicial system and child services where the children's museum is the site for court-monitored visitations between parents and children in the system.
Strategy 5: Benefits of Web 2.0 Outreach

- Untapped resource for advocacy
  - Over 300 million on Facebook
  - Almost 20% of internet users use Twitter
- Effective for pulling advocates and legislators in (not just pushing information out)
- You, your patrons, friends and legislative audience already use it!
Strategy 5: How to do Web 2.0 Outreach

- Use www.SpeakUpForMuseums.org to personalize and send letters, reviewing talking points on current issues for calls, etc.
- Virtual Townhalls and Meetings
- Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Other New Tools
  - Connect with other groups
  - Connect with your elected officials
  - Use these resources for effective networking
What Other Resources Are Available?

- Register for and attend our future online training sessions!
  - PART 4 - Making Your Case 101: What to Say, How to Say It, and Getting Your Staff and Visitors Involved in Your Museum’s Cause
    When: Tuesday, December 8, 2009 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST

- Register for Museums Advocacy Day 2010

- Use Speakupformuseums.org to send letters to your legislators

- Work with your AAM government relations team – they are here to help.
Final Questions or Comments?

AAM Contact Information online

- Gail Ravnitzky Silberglieed, Director of Government Relations
  Phone: (202) 218-7705
  Email: gsilberglieed@aam-us.org

- Carla J. Myers, Assistant Director of Government Relations
  Phone: (202) 218-7699
  Email: cmyers@aam-us.org

- Ember Farber, Grassroots & Advocacy Manager
  Phone: (202) 218-7703
  Email: efarber@aam-us.org