Making Your Case 101: What to Say, How to Say It, and Getting Your Staff and Visitors Involved in Your Museum’s Cause

The American Association of Museums’ Online Advocacy Training Series, Part 4

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
- Message Trends
- Five Strategies for Building Coalitions
- 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

Carla Myers: Acting Director, AAM Government Relations
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
# AAM Online Information Center

**HELP is JUST A CLICK AWAY!**

AAM ONLINE INFORMATION CENTER

Eight categories full of information to help you save time and solve problems available at [www.aam-us.org/infocenter](http://www.aam-us.org/infocenter)

- Collections Stewardship
- Facilities & Risk Management
- Financial Stability
- Governance & Support Organizations
- Human Resources
- Interpretation & Education
- Marketing & Public Relations
- Mission & Institutional Planning

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<th>Individual Members</th>
<th>Institutional Museum Members</th>
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www.aam-us.org/infocenter
Where are we Starting From?

Let’s go to the polls!
A Look at Recent Message Trends
What Has Congress Been Focusing On?

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<th>Bills About...</th>
<th>110th Congress (Entire 2 years)</th>
<th>111th Congress (So far...)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
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What’s the Point?

- As the context changes, so must the message
- Flexibility – and the ability to create new messages – is key
- Getting others engaged in your cause (staff, visitors, coalition groups) will help you achieve that goal
Messaging in This Context

Option One: Successful versus unsuccessful approaches
How do Museums Tie In To “Hot” Issues?

- Medical Museums have it easy…
- But what about:
  - How museums have been impacted by the economic downturn?
  - Museums with International Collections and Programs?
  - Museum Exhibitions and Programs on Building and Sustaining Green Communities?
  - Other connections? Be creative!
Potential “Everyday” Connections

- Reduced income / loss of sponsors
- Reducing your museum’s carbon footprint
- Providing health care for employees
- Providing services to returning or deploying service people and their families
- Providing critical community services – blood drives, food drives, after school programs, serving as voting locations
Also Consider…

How do museums tie in to the interests of your specific legislators?
Key Point: Understand the Message Trends and Audience

Then Think About How Your Staff, Visitors and Potential Coalition Partners Can Help You Deliver That Message
Why participate in coalitions?
Who Can Help? Where Can You Find Coalition Partners?

- Staff
- Visitors
- Friends
- Trustees
- Volunteers/Retirees
- Corporate Sponsors
- Groups leading other community causes
Let’s Look at a National Example

The NWHM National Coalition represents a growing number of national women's professional and service organizations committed to:

- Supporting the NWHM mission:
  
The National Women’s History Museum affirms the importance of an accurate and complete understanding of the past. The Museum will fill in a missing part of history - women’s history. To do this, the museum will research, collect and exhibit the contributions of women to the social, cultural, economic and political life of our nation in the context of work history. The Museum will use innovative and engaging means, including permanent and traveling exhibits, its CyberMuseum, educational programs, and outreach efforts to communicate the breadth of women’s experiences and accomplishments to the widest possible audience. The sharing of this knowledge will illuminate and encourage women and men, people of all ages, classes, races and cultures to move into the future with greater partnership, equal respect, confidence, and opportunity.

- Supporting the efforts to acquire a permanent site near the National Mall in Washington, DC
- Participating in communicating to increase the visibility of the respective national organizations and
- Seeking new opportunities for collaboration.

The NWHM salutes its Coalition members representing 30 national organizations.
Let’s Look at a Local Example
And Another Local Example...
Some Museum Coalition Examples

- Denver Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (www.scfd.org)
- Balboa Park Cultural Partnership (http://www.bpcp.org)
- Museums in the Park (Chicago) (http://www.museumsinthepark.org)
- Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (https://www.philaculture.org)
Want to find other examples?

Use AAM’s Membership Directory Search
Developing Coalitions

Approaching Potential Coalition Partners

- The best and easiest approach: ASK THEM TO JOIN!
- Know Your Audience: Who on your staff or board is best positioned to ask different potential partners to the table?
- The “kick in the pants” approach: Involve an elected official in the process.
Developing Coalitions

Approaching coalition partners: Materials

- Develop a concrete (although flexible) idea of what you want the coalition to be and express that in a one-pager
  - What is your mission?
  - What will you want coalition members to do?
  - What resources will coalition members provide to one another?
  - Is there a single goal for the coalition or something more expansive?
Developing Coalitions

Utilizing Coalition Partners

- Always, always, always establish a mission and goals
- Never, never, never be unwilling to review the mission and goals
- Identify specific tasks based on those goals and make assignments based on strengths and connections
- Sometimes it’s good to have a meeting with your coalition “just to meet”
Developing Coalitions

Utilizing Coalition Partners: Materials

- **Power Map:** Who do the members of your coalition have the most influence with?
- **Coalition Intake Form:** Helps assess the strengths of your coalition members.
Developing Coalitions

Coalitions Into the Future

- Once a specific mission has been achieved, don’t disband – find new goals
- Even if the group is dormant for a while, maintain contact
- Consider growing the coalition developed for a single purpose into a strategic long-term alliance
A Few Things to Remember

- Often easiest to coalesce around one idea or message
  - Support museum-friendly policies (general)
  - Oppose legislation X, Y, Z (specific)
- Coalition members need to have flexibility
- Politics makes for strange bedfellows: You may not always be friends and that’s OK
- Reactive vs. proactive coalition building
What Other Resources Are Available?

- Register NOW for Museums Advocacy Day 2010 – If you can’t attend, make sure someone from your museum or coalition does!
- Use www.speakupformuseums.org to send letters to your legislators
- Work with your AAM government relations team – they are here to help.
Final Questions or Comments?

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