

Ten Golden Rules of Lobbying

1. Politics Is Consumer-Driven

Help your legislator understand why your position is important to his or her constituents. Fight where the legislator lives through grassroots organizations at home.

2. Do Your Homework

Know your stuff. Understand your issue, the bill you support or oppose, and the legislative process before you approach your legislator. Know who the players are, who decides what, and which issues are hot at the moment.

3. Information Is Power

The secret is the distribution of information to legislators and their constituents. Be prepared to give the legislator information he or she can use, including what you are hearing from other legislators and from people back home.

4. A Little Professionalism Goes a Long Way

Be credible, honest and trustworthy. Never threaten, lie or conceal facts. Stay calm — if you lose your cool, you lose the case.

5. Be Positive

Always make your case without being critical of others' personalities or motives.

6. There Are No Permanent Friends and No Permanent Enemies

Don't take your traditional friends for granted. Never write off a legislator just because of party affiliation. Don't make enemies of legislators — you may need them as friends in the future.

7. Build a Bond, Not a Gap

Research things you might have in common with the legislator. Use shared values to create easy, friendly, frequent communication with legislators.

8. Be a Partner

Build coalitions and look for allies among other organizations. Be accessible to legislators and other lobbyists if they have questions or need follow-up information. Become known as a reliable resource.

9. Rome Wasn't Built in a Day

Aim for consensus rather than for a "victory." Be willing to settle for making progress toward your goal, getting the bill passed, and fine-tuning it in future sessions.

10. Stay Committed

Remember — you are the expert! You have a compelling, energizing reason to keep fighting until you get what you need.