

POLITICAL LOBBYING

HOW TO PLAN AND DELIVER A STRATEGY TO
CONFIRM,
INFORM
OR CHANGE
THE MINDS OF POLITICIANS

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1996 - 2008



 **Labour**
Te Ropu Reipa

Lobbying

What is it?

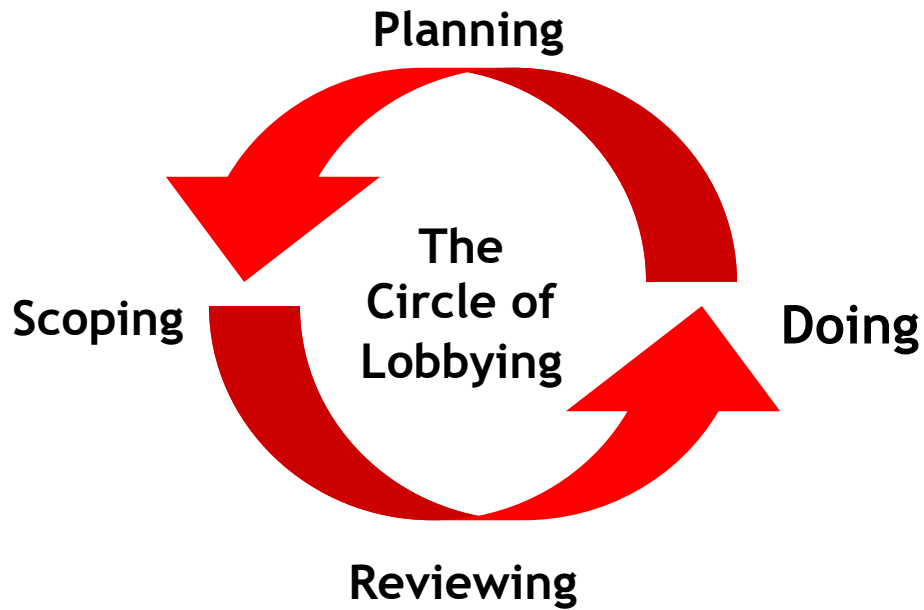
- It is a spectrum, from persuasion to confirmation, within the broader sphere of campaigning.
- It can be one-off or ongoing. It can be direct or indirect.
- It can aim to achieve a specific outcome or merely raise awareness.
- It is private rather than public, although a combination of individual lobby elements can become high profile.
- It can be multi-layered, involving different messages in different ways to different people.
- Much of it is about marketing.
- It can be undertaken by volunteers, by dedicated paid staff or contracted staff.

Who can do it?

- Individual voluntary sector agencies; networks of agencies.
- Individuals or networks of individuals.
- The private sector, often via industry bodies or sector bodies, local bodies.
- Paid-for lobbyists

Who is targeted?

- Politicians (local; national);
- Policy makers (political party officials and activists; Caucus research staff; local body and Government department key officials);
- Media (to cover issues, to influence others);
- Organisations (public, private or voluntary).



TEN Steps to Lobby Success

Scoping

1. Initial evaluation: What's your message?
2. Information sources: What's the background?
3. Lobby strategy: Work to a plan!

Planning

4. Lobby Planning: Do it!
5. Intervene: Choose the right point!
6. Target: Know who and how!

Doing

7. Meeting: Plan and focus.
8. Submission: Get the message into the system.
9. Media: Can be worth the risk!

Reviewing

10. Evaluation: How did your lobbying work?
How do we change things next time?
A new issue: Sources of Information?

Scoping

1. INITIAL EVALUATION

First, break the issue down to the basics. Work out your key messages:

For working through this, sentences should be:

Simple and clear.

Powerful - persuasive and compelling.

Targeted at your intended audiences.

It is as important to be able to describe the policy solution you seek as it is to describe the problem.

There are four key elements to the message.

First, there is a clear **statement of concern**.

What's the wrong you need changed?

Second is the **value dimension**.

What are your / your organisations values which you are applying to the problem to develop a solution?

Third is the **solution**.

What are the policies, laws or attitudes, which need to be changed? How?

Fourth is the **specific call for action**.

What you would like your lobbyists to do first, in order to make progress towards achieving the solution?

2. INFORMATION SOURCES

10 sources for your lobby preparation

The New Zealand Government has a number of websites. On www.beehive.govt.nz you will find speeches and press statements by the Prime Minister and Ministers. You can subscribe to receive them. It is often possible to be put on the **mailing/email list for Ministerial press statements** e.g. a specific Minister's office; politicians are generally thrilled to give out copies of their speeches and press statements.

A general overview of New Zealand and its Government is provided by www.newzealand.govt.nz. On this page you find a section called "Participate in Government" which offers a variety of references about submissions, petitions and contacts with policy makers. **Personal contacts** can be invaluable e.g. Parliamentary Clerk's office, politician's office, Ministry staff.

New Zealand Parliament has a homepage at www.parliament.nz that links to the "Parliamentary Business". There is an alphabetical list and summary of all the bills being considered by the current Parliament.

Government print outlets, e.g. Bennetts Book Shop, have the latest Bills and policy review documents; the former are low cost and the latter sometimes relatively expensive. *Parliamentary Bulletin* lists all bills introduced by the current Parliament and current Select Committee hearings; it is produced by Parliamentary Services weekly while Parliament sits. Some of its contents are published on www.parliament.nz.

Major reviews and the introduction of Bills are often announced in the **media**; however, significant media coverage of Bills at select committee often comes when it is too late to make submissions; early coverage does not usually explain the full implications of a bill. Some recommended news sites would be: www.scoop.co.nz ; www.stuff.co.nz ; www.nzherald.co.nz

The website www.legislation.govt.nz provides free public access to unofficial versions of **New Zealand statutes** (Public, Local, and Private Acts) and Statutory Regulations. The website www.theyworkforyou.co.nz is a volunteer-operated information source about the political process in Parliament.

Action Network. A lobby support initiative by BBC World with a number of interesting best practice examples: www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork

The Law Commission is an advisory body to undertake the systematic review, reform and development of the law of New Zealand. Their reports and advice can be of particular interest for your lobby planning: www.lawcom.govt.nz

Scoping

3. LOBBY STRATEGY

7 steps to a clear plan

What is your lobby aim?

What specific information do you have on the issues involved?

To achieve the aim, what specific changes do you intend?

What makes you the right person or organisation to deliver it? Do you have any allies in the fight?

Who are you up against? What kind of support do they have? How did they get it? What does this tell you?

What lobby methods do you want to use?

What are the stages of your planned lobby, in order?

4. PLANNING YOUR LOBBY

10 planning stages for the potential lobbyist to follow

Know your topic and what you want to say about it	Collect sufficient up to date information on the topic and identify what is special about you and the message, which you want to deliver.
Decide who you need to get to	Specify your target group, and break it into its component parts and levels of authority.
Analyse	Work out what their sources of information and current beliefs are on that topic.
Know the opposition	Research how rival interests working on the same topic manage to get their message over to that target group.
Narrow your options	Prioritise the potential ways of getting over to the target in terms of potential impact.
Select appropriate options	Identify how compatible your message is with those ways of getting the message to the target, remembering what resources are available to you and how your cause is perceived publicly.
The marketing mix	Combine your strengths, your message and your access to the information sources and your selected lobby option. Prioritise as you go.
Do it!	
Reflect on it	Evaluate what you did; revisit the marketing mix. If things went poorly, work your way back through the process until you understand why that happened.
Record and archive	Maintain records of contact made and copies of material produced.

Planning

5. INTERVENE

Making the system work for you

Persons and Timing:

At preliminary stages (to initiate a political debate) you might talk to:

Party members and your local MPs:

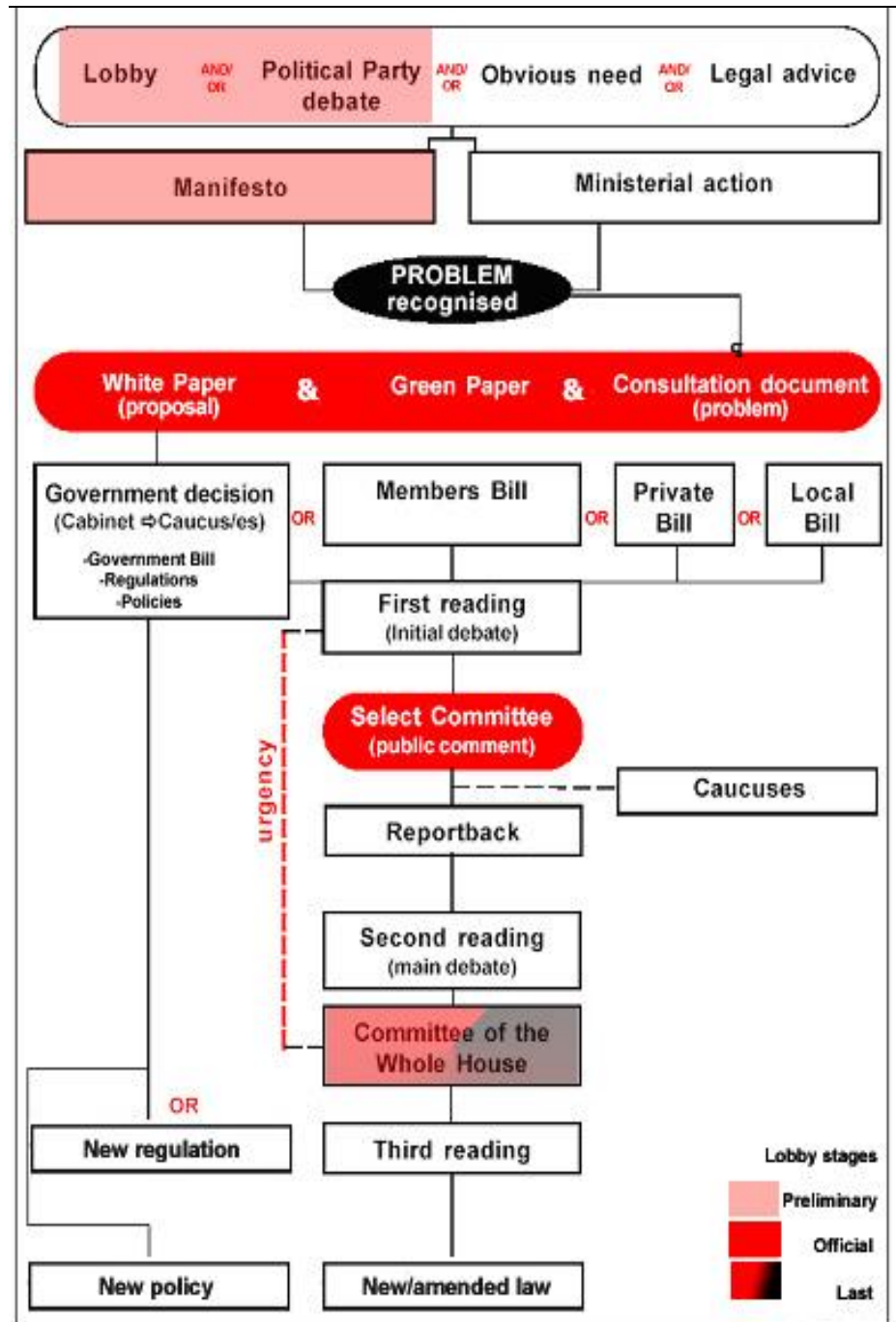
www.labour.org.nz
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www.unitedfuture.org.nz
www.nzfirst.org.nz
www.greens.org.nz
www.national.org.nz
www.maoriparty.org.nz
www.act.org.nz

and/or

Policy Advisers at:

www.beehive.govt.nz
www.msd.govt.nz
www.treasury.govt.nz
www.med.govt.nz
etc.

After the first reading you should try to contact the persons involved in the legislation, rather than sending circulars. You will find the names of MPs involved at the Parliament's website:
www.parliament.nz



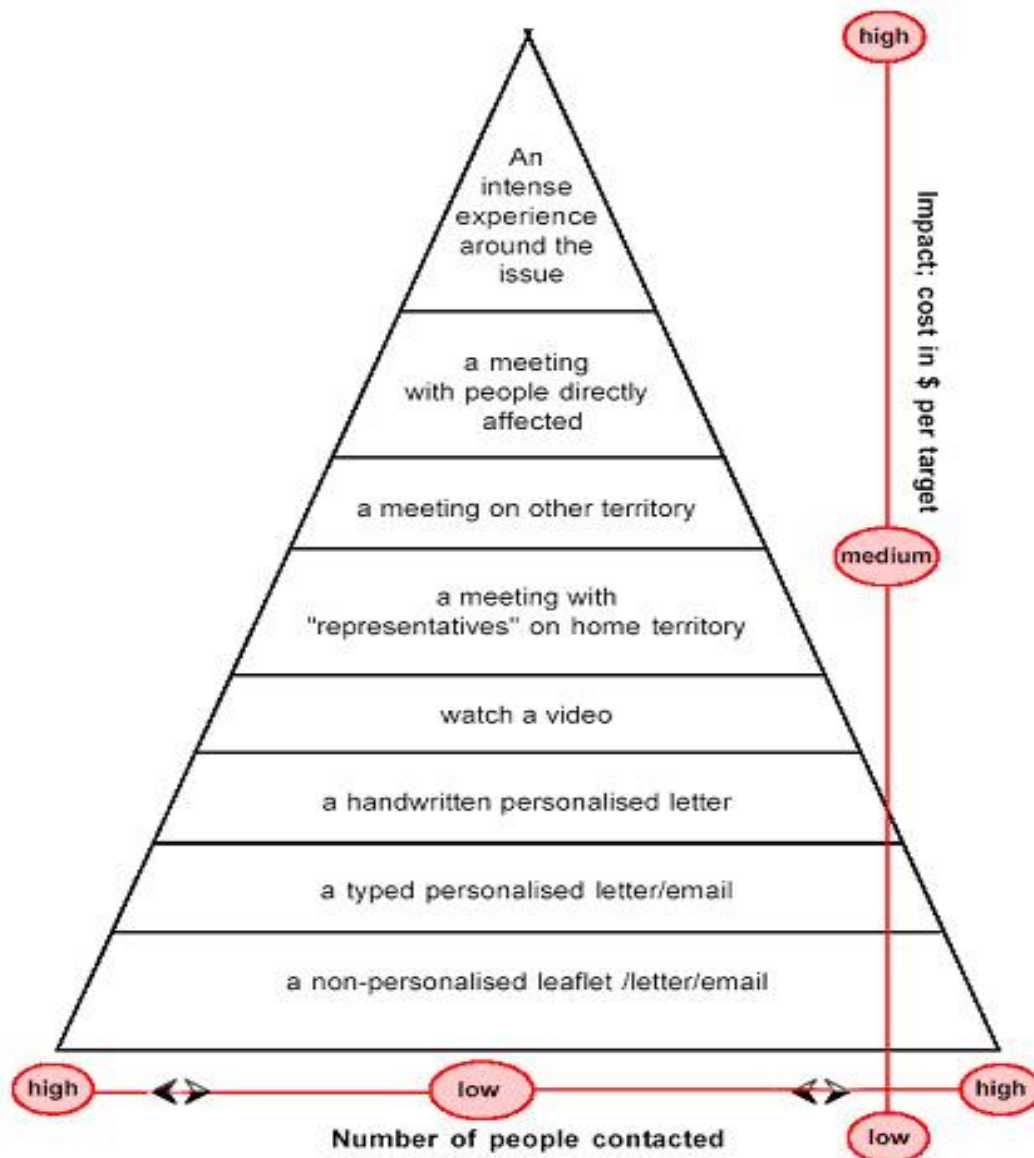
6. TARGET

Attention junkies	MPs (Electorate and List, opposition and Government, in different ways) are driven by media coverage.
Expert on a few things	Given the complexity of it all, most MPs specialise - mainly on what they did (and possibly plan to do in future life) on the outside.
Spectator	Most MPs are less powerful than they think they are.
Friendless	MPs work in a highly competitive atmosphere; friendships are not easy to make or maintain. Also, all MPs realise just how unpopular their profession can be and seek mutually constructive lobby relationships.
Human, after all...	MPs are many other things e.g. women, men, Maori, gay, Aucklanders, parent and looking to life after Parliament. Average time there is 6 years. They are fundamentally fearful of losing their job or disrupting their career path.
Kangaroo	MPs spend their days and lives hopping from one issue to another, from one place to another.
The paper war	MPs are overwhelmed by an endless stream of E-mails, text messages, faxes, letters, newspaper clippings, internal memos and telephone messages (to a variety of telephone numbers).
Not knowing whom to believe....	On many issues, MPs receive directly contradictory information arguing opposite points of view, both of which use facts selectively.
The same vices...	MPs don't demand that information comes to them in a different way to other people. But the pressures they are under do mean that if the information is to make that special impact, it needs to have that extra edge.
Whipped (and manifested and coalesced) into agreement	The Party <i>whipping</i> system in Parliament, Coalition and other government support agreements and General Election manifestos - even Party policy - takes many decisions out of the hands of individual MPs.

Planning

CONE OF EXPERIENCE

How to package and present your message



7. (a) MEETING PLANNING

10 things to think about as you plan the meeting with a MP

Know why you want to meet	The meeting must fit into your pre-arranged lobby plan. The type of experience which you generate for the MP will determine the impact made. Factors include - how powerful are they or could they be one day; how much time do they have available? What ongoing communication methods do they prefer?
Present your message	Use the Cone of Experience. (Page 11)
Notice given	If humanly possible, avoid presenting the meeting as so urgent that other commitments have to be moved to make way for it. Let the MPs' office-staff know what you want to see the MP about.
Location	A MP's office is their comfort zone. Decide whether you want them to be comfortable, or want to challenge them a little...
Time	Ask for what you realistically need - but be prepared for a few minutes or even a postponement if chaos descends on their day.
Do your homework	Use any relevant contacts which you have prior to the meeting to help warm up your target. Research the known views of that MP, both in general and specifically about that topic. Also, any information in their background which can be a starting point for genuine communication. Specifically, you should know if someone from your organisation has previously volunteered for them, is in their party, or has some other link. Pay attention to, and engage with, any staff of the MPs who you meet in their office/at the meeting Recognise the constraints on the MP, e.g. a Minister is covered by collective Cabinet responsibility.
Person and numbers	Don't overwhelm the MP with numbers of people - and make sure that everyone there has a task or role. If the MP has a particular important characteristic (e.g. Maori, woman), the delegation should reflect that. Take someone unexpected and memorable.

- A dry run** If the message is complicated, if the task of persuasion is hard, if there will be more than a couple of you at the meeting - then meet and run through things beforehand.
- Image** Wear whatever you feel most comfortable in and - if possible - fits with your message. Make sure that you know where the meeting place is, and that you are on time.
- Something to leave** Never leave the MP empty-handed. Prepare something, which fits in with your message and reinforces key points. Work through it at the meeting and leave it for them to consider...
- Keep it going ...** Plan ahead of the meeting what action you will ask the MP to undertake, and any commitments, which you will make to them. Ensure that you have the resources to deliver what you promise, and make use of whatever they may do for you.

7. (b) MEETING DELIVERY

10 things to make the meeting go well

Not too long	Ask at the start how much time the MP has got - and/or check with their office staff member beforehand. Plan your presentation accordingly with flexibility. If it sounds as though they have lots of time, don't use it all up unless vital.
Keep them involved	You have come to discuss an issue, not lecture the MP about it. Make sure that you don't let your enthusiasm become a one-sided conversation. Use experiential techniques if appropriate.
Recognise tiredness & boredom	The MP may well be tired. Pick up the signs (snoring, irrational comments...) and focus down to the key points. Maybe even suggest a further meeting if things seem to be getting nowhere. Learn to read signs that MPs have stopped listening. Change the focus onto them; introduce something lighter...
Follow the lead but stick to the knitting	If the MP wants to talk about something - even irrelevant to the topic - humour them and then try and guide the conversation back to the topic.
Illustrate and justify	When possible, bring issues to life with statistics, stories involving people, preferably facts and figures or real people from their Electorate or communities. Don't make exaggerated claims, which sound unbelievable and can't be justified.
Stay safe	Avoid entering the MPs danger zone/s - issues which could make them defensive or upset.
Know your stuff	You need to know enough to not need to say, "I don't know" to a reasonably obvious question. If you really don't know and can't make a safe guess, offer to forward the accurate answer, if possible after making an intelligent guess.
Cope with aggression	The MP may simply loathe the message - or the messenger. Do what comes naturally and don't destroy a potential lobby relationship forever. If possible, maintain your cool and follow rational argument, focusing on the most powerful and irrefutable facts. Be aware that a threat can backfire.
Leave your message	Never leave the MP empty-handed. Prepare something, which fits in with your message and reinforces key points. Work through a pre-prepared document, which reinforces key points, and leave it for the MP to consider. Powerpoint presentations can be a very useful tool.

Make a hit

Leave the MP with some action to undertake. And negotiate yourself the ability to keep the channels of communication open checking with them, or their staff, what the best way forward is.

Follow up the meeting with a thank you note or phone call.

Forward any extra information which the MP requests.

Keep in touch with them from time to time.

Ask them to do something for you, which is achievable and keeps you in their mind - and make it easy for them to show support.

Don't plague them with follow-up phone calls or e-mails.

8. (a) SUBMISSION WRITING

10 ways of writing your submission for maximum impact

Know where the issue is at and where it is going	<p>Are you raising an issue cold, or inputting to an established process?</p> <p>Cold - organise your information and arguments to get the issue on the agenda; aim to touch a raw political nerve. Should be part of a wider strategy.</p> <p>Established - has the issue got to Parliament or is it with officials? What is driving the review? What are they really prepared to move on? Organise your information and arguments accordingly.</p>
Know the audience	<p>Write to the level of understanding of the likely audience - both immediate (e.g. back-bench politicians on a Select Committee) and ultimate (e.g. Minister and their advisers). You need to know whose minds you are trying to move.</p>
Talk yourselves up	<p>Start the submission with information on who you and/or the submitting organisation are; who you represent; why your viewpoint is of particular importance.</p>
Quality or quantity?	<p>Is the priority to produce lots of (similar) submissions or a few special ones? Or a mixture of both? Plan accordingly.</p>
Focus on your special message	<p>What are you uniquely or specially experienced to write about? Can it be backed up by facts or figures? Does it link to a specific amendment or change? - if so, try and detail that.</p>
Work to your strengths	<p>If you have stories to tell, tell them. If you speak better than you write, keep it simple and perform in front of the Committee or choose the right person in your group to do that. If submitting to a Parliamentary Select Committee or other process which involves the chance for an oral submission, you must state in the submission or cover letter that you wish to speak to your submission - otherwise you may lose the chance.</p>
Make it look as good as it sounds	<p>Aim for 4 pages maximum, with other material put in appendices.</p> <p>Summarise and use bullet points.</p> <p>Use visuals and white space effectively.</p> <p>Make it look professional.</p>
Keep it (quite) short and sweet	<p>Write using clear language.</p> <p>Tell the truth and illustrate with stories. Don't make statements that cannot be justified if challenged.</p>

Be constructive - and present amendments etc. in as detailed a way as you can.

Present your argument in a logical order that flows well.

Offer constructive criticism

Don't get personal about the people who will be looking at the submission.

Keep something back

For Select Committees, and most others, you are allowed to present a supplementary submission. This can contain in-depth information on an urgent issue important to you, and/or new information on an issue already raised. If you plan to do an oral submission, keep something back to raise when you present it.

(b) SUBMISSION PRESENTATION

10 points on presenting your submission for maximum impact

**Know your message
Get it over briefly and clearly**

Work out your key message, making it as unique and memorable as possible.
Plan to speak for no more than 5 minutes - and time yourself when practising. Keep 5 minutes extra in reserve (in case they have longer available); have a 3-minute version ready (in case they are under time pressure).
Do not assume that the members of the panel have read your submission - but never say that!
Do not read your submission word for word. But do plan the flow of your presentation on the direction taken by the submission. Use ordinary language -and the occasional strong phrase to stress a point. Speak clearly. Avoid being too technical.

Give it colour and life

Remember that you are probably not speaking to experts. Use anecdote, especially personal experiences, to get panel members on your side. Telling a story about an issue, and/or talking about yourself, is a good way of getting a message over.

Stay calm

If possible, and if it doesn't confuse your message, have someone with you who can give the message more depth and character, illustrating a particular point.

If the panel cuts back on your time, do not show your annoyance. Accept that they are a pressured body. Do not react badly in response to panel members whose only intention is to upset you. Keep returning to your basic message.

Plan for the worst

Anticipate the most difficult questions, which opponents of your message might ask you - and plan superb answers to them. If possible, incorporate those issues into in your presentation.

Don't say what you can't justify

Avoid making open-ended comments and exaggerations, which you can't prove. That plays into your enemies' hand.

Don't demonise the members of the panel

The panel members will have a variety of views on the issue, which you are submitting about. Do not assume that they are all against you, and don't attack those who you know are opposed. Don't ask rhetorical or direct questions of individual Committee members. It's their chance to ask questions.

Give them a bit more

If you have something new and urgent to say, or more in-depth information on a matter raised in your submission, produce a supplementary submission. It could be in your own words; some statistics; an item from the media or a

researcher. Bring along enough copies to hand out to everyone. The people staffing the panel/committee will take the paper for recording and distribution.

Say it with more than words

If there is a non-oral way of getting your point over (for example, a role play; a photograph; using OHP or data show, or whatever), and this medium fits in OK with your topic, use it. Make the experience of your submission a memorable one for the panel.

Wrap it up

If you want changes to what a bill says, or want an inquiry to make certain recommendations, make it clear and even provide wording.

9. MEDIA

10 points for lobbyists keen to generate supportive media exposure

- | | |
|--|--|
| Be realistic | Recognise the inherent risks and seductive opportunities involved in encouraging media interest. |
| Write it down and pause if possible | If you get a cold-call from the media asking you to comment on something, do everything to avoid responding then and there. That is high risk territory for mistakes. Offer to call back in a few minutes, end the call, work out something and phone back. Or offer to put your thoughts in writing and E-mail or fax through. |
| Know yourself | Keep asking yourself “What is special about the message or a release (containing news), a statement (a response to a previous or current event), an advisory (advertising an event in which you are involved) I have to give?” The media keeps asking: “who cares about this?” |
| Appearance counts | If writing a release, focus on key elements:
One side, 1 ½ space;
Arial lettering style;
The first sentence should summarize the whole message in 25 words or less, leading into an actual explanation of the news item and a quote, and ending with your contact details, including a cell-phone number. |
| Be alert | If the media respond, get back to them fast. They work to tight deadlines. They are generally doing you more of a favour than you are doing them. |
| Playing with fire | Before saying anything which might come back to harm you but you feel you must say, establish that you have “ <i>off the record</i> ” status and avoid saying anything that only you could possibly have known or thought. If radio calls, make sure that you are not in a car (background noise). The landline is usually the best. |
| Know your limits | Don’t try and control what the journalist might produce; don’t insist at approving something before it is published. If they offer that, fine. And do make sure they know you are open to being approached. |
| Don’t despair | At the bad moments, when a negative story about you is the first item in every news broadcast, remember that there is |

much truth in the assertion that “all publicity is good publicity”.

Your target

A media release etc. provided by you, which is repeated word for word, prominently, in the media which you have targeted is a bull’s-eye hit!

One key relationship

Befriend a journalist who can give you occasional and off-the-record feedback and help you understand the media culture.

Reviewing

10. EVALUATION

7 steps for the next lobby project

1. What were the stages of your lobby, in order?

2. Did you have all specific information you needed?

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5. Were you the right person or organisation to deliver it? Did you have any allies in the fight?

6. What did your opposition do? How did they do it? Who supported them? What does this tell you?

7. What lobby methods did you try with what prior research and what success?

Compliments of
Labour MPs working in Whanganui

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Status of this document

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