

# Rules for Effective Advocacy

The name of the game is: **COMMUNICATION**

## Rule 1: Know your issue

- Learn as much about your issue as you can
- Make sure you know who is on the other side, if anyone
- Make sure you know the other side's arguments
- Anticipate what questions might be asked and develop good answers

## Rule 2: Always tell the truth

- The only thing you have is your credibility – do not lose it
- Don't overstate your case
- If you don't know the answer, don't make it up – tell them you will get back with the information
- If by some chance you have given out misinformation, the minute you find out go back and tell those you have relayed the information

## Rule 3: Don't wait until you need something

- Meet the candidates and newly elected legislators and try to
- find out how they view issues
- Everyone responds better to someone they know than someone they just met
- People don't like to only be recognized when something is needed

## Rule 4: Determine the best way to communicate

- Meeting with people in person is always the most effective way to convey information and present your side persuasively
- However this is not always possible the following tools can also be used:
  - Phone call
  - Letter
  - E-mail
  - Fax
- It depends on personal preferences as to which method is the most effective. Try to find out. Just ask.

## Rule 5: Presenting yourself

- Treat this like you are going to a business meeting – dress appropriately
- Do not be rude
- Do not do things that some would find offensive

## Rule 6: Be timely

- Know where your issue is in the process. If you are two weeks behind that does not look good.

- If you committed to providing additional information do it in a timely manner.

**Rule 7: Say thank you**

**Rule 8: Collaborate**

- Look for allies – form coalitions with other groups with similar interests on the issue
- Encourage your colleagues and allies to send the same general messages to the same legislators and others who respect them

**Rule 9: Understand the politics**

- There are always other issues in the mix besides yours. Your issue may get caught in “the game.”
- For whatever reason, a legislator may not be able to support you on this issue. Do not make the person a permanent enemy.
- There will always be another day and a new issue.

**Rule 10: Rarely is an issue black and white**

- Make sure you know what your compromise room is on your issue
- Legislators like for everyone to get something

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