

Effective Communication

State Associations, Board Members, and Legislative Leaders



Chad Collins, General Counsel
Kentucky High School Athletic Association

If you are not at the Table, your on the Menu



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"If you can't spot the sucker in your first half hour at the poker table, then you are the sucker"



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Who are we?

- State Associations
- Board Members of State Associations
- ADs
- Others...



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State Associations

- Voluntary, Independent, Non-Incorporated (KY)
- Not for Profit Corporation
- State Agency (part of the State Department)



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What are we trying to avoid?

(When Dealing with Legislators)

- Interference with operations
- Losing control of the conversation
- Allowing outside control
- Continued watering down of education based athletics
- Allowing success driven approaches that only favor the few (prioritize opportunity)
- Others...



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What are we trying to encourage?

(Values)

- Independent Operations
- Fairness
- Maximize Opportunities
- Health and Safety
- Control the Message (narrative)
- Others...



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Building Relationships

(Bottom Line)

- Eliminate the Us v. Them mentality
- Make them an Ally
- Bring them into the Fold
- Make them one of Us
- Humanize the State Association
- Others



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How to Build the Relationship

(You're on the Team Now)

We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now. -
Martin Luther King, Jr.



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How to Build the Relationship

(You're on the Team Now)

- Know your Legislators:
 - What County/School District are they in?
 - What party are they? Are they conservative, moderate, liberal?
 - Know their Gatekeeper (staff)
 - Pay attention and reach out to freshman legislators...(Control the Narrative)
 - What sports/activities were they involved in?
 - Others?



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How to Build the Relationship

(You're on the Team Now)

- Trophy and Awards Presentations (for their districts)
- Coin Flip at the State Championship
- Tickets to your high profile Championships (Caution...)
- Color Commentator/Guest for Broadcasts
- Guest at Radio Show Blogs
- Chair or Member of Task Force on important issue
- Other examples from other states...



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How to Build the Relationship

(Lobbyist or Not, That is the Question)

- What is Lobbying?

The act of attempting to influence decisions made by government officials, including legislators and regulators, on behalf of individuals or organizations.



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How to Build the Relationship (Lobbyist or Not, That is the Question)

- Lobbying generally does not include: Appearances before committees, subcommittees, task forces, and interim committees of the General Assembly; News, editorial, and advertising statements published in newspapers...; Publications primarily designed for, and distributed to, members of bona fide associations or charitable or fraternal nonprofit corporations; Professional services in drafting bills or resolutions, preparing arguments ; The action of any person not engaged by an employer who has a direct interest in legislation; The action of any natural person whose official responsibilities do not include lobbying.



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How to Build the Relationship (Lobbyist or Not, That is the Question)

- Who is a Lobbyist?

A person who is paid to influence government officials on behalf of a client or organization, with the goal of affecting legislation or government policy.



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How to Build the Relationship (Lobbyist or Not, That is the Question)

- Registration Requirements (State by State)
- Fee Payments (\$25-\$750)
- Cost of Lobbying...



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How to Build the Relationship (Lobbyist or Not, That is the Question)

Benefits of using a lobbyist:

- Expert Knowledge (process)
- Access
- Shaping Policy
- Funding Priorities
- Monitoring/Mitigation of Risk



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How to Build the Relationship (Lobbyist or Not, That is the Question)

Drawbacks of using a lobbyist:

- Cost
- Public Perception
- Lack of Transparency
- Ineffective Resource Allocation
- Loss of Customer Focus



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How to Build the Relationship

(The Art of the Deal)

Now that you have a relationship (or an audience) with a lawmaker, what's next? (Basis Tips)

1. Tell the Truth!
2. Be Specific
3. Ask for Action!
4. Plan Time Wisely (5 minutes?)
5. Always Respect
6. Follow-up Contact (Email/Note)
7. Bring Staff



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How to Build the Relationship

(The Art of the Deal)

What to avoid when meeting with a lawmaker:

1. Don't BS and BSer...
2. Being Late
3. Unprofessional Dress
4. Bringing up issues outside scope...
5. Partisan Critique
6. Threats (negativity)
7. Inflexibility (pivot)



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How to Build the Relationship

(The Art of the Deal)

- The Bottom Line is that developing relationships with legislators, lawmakers, and the executive branch cannot be undervalued.



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How to Build the Relationship

(The Art of the Deal)

- Effective Communication
 - Legislative Leaders
 - AI
 - Media
 - Useful Technologies



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Closing Thoughts...

“Failure is not fatal but failure to change might be.” — John Wooden



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Questions or Discussion



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