

So, You are Thinking About an Advocacy Campaign

How-To Checklist for Association CEOs and Boards

Advocacy is something that most associations engage in at some point.

This checklist will help you get your ducks in a row for advocacy campaigns. The more work you put in upfront, the quicker, easier and more successful your advocacy campaigns are likely to be.

What?	How?	More Info	Done?
What?	<p>The first step is to work out what you want to advocate on or who you want to advocate for.</p> <p>Then reframe it as an outcome, not an output.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Output –private health insurers give us our own item code</p> <p>Outcome – private health members know and use our members more</p>	
Membership & Board	<p>Engage your membership/Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they know you are working for them • direct and guide their own advocacy efforts 		
Research	<p>The more information you have up your sleeve, the better. Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your members’ experiences (their stories of how they deal with the advocacy area) • governments KPIs, policy, positions, etc • other stakeholders positions, policy, etc 		
Timing	<p>Is it the right time?</p> <p>Some advocacy goals are opposed to current government policy and direction.</p> <p>If it’s an election year, consider how you can support candidates’ goals.</p>		

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What?	How?	More Info this column is for you to fill out	Done?
Joint Responsibility	What can you and your profession/industry to do help resolve the issue? Focus on being part of the solution.		
Stakeholders	Engage with other stakeholders. If they are on your side, work with them. If they oppose you, understand why.		
Problem	Explain the issue, clearly and concisely. Avoid complicating your message by weaving in too many messages. (Imagine you are telling your grandma)		
Your Ask	Offer a clear, concise solution. Your solution should be flexible enough to adapt to government's requirements		
Who?	Always, always, always approach the relevant department(s) first. Consider smaller departments, including the small business advocate/ombudsman. This will save you a lot of time.		
Communicate	Use the right language "government-ish". Be helpful - negotiate, answer their questions, do further research, etc.		
Complexity	Policy-making is nearly always more complex that you think. Government needs to balance ALL interests in the community. A stakeholder map may assist here.		
Patient	Large organisations take time to make decisions, which can often even include deciding which part of their organisation will deal with you.		



Persistent	Give them a reminder every so often, if you haven't heard back.		
Innovate	Try different ways to approach your solution. Sometimes, the roundabout way works best.		
Last resort?	Ministers and media are generally your last resort. A cooperative partnership works best. (see above point <i>who?</i>)		

More information on the points in this checklist can be found [here](#) or contact me to put in a request for a future Ausae advocacy article.