

the arguments made by their opponents. Eventually questions will be asked regarding counter-points made against your arguments. You must be prepared to rebut them.

Also, your organization will want to proactively publicize any arguments against the opposition's point-of-view. This will generate greater interest among reporters. Controversy breeds media attention.

Finding Champions

Depending on what type of advocacy campaign your association will be conducting, there may be a need for finding one or more government officials who will promote your interests. These champions may help to further your interests in the process of creating and amending national laws. They also may defend you against proposals that may harm your interests. Take time to establish relationships with such individuals now. Have government officials who support your cause generate media attention, since they can sometimes do so more easily.

Mobilization

Make use of your members and their expertise throughout this entire process. Be sure to provide them with timely and accurate briefing materials and questions to ask. Their involvement is a precious commodity; don't assume they know everything. Give them talking points to use: simple points to make in a letter or during a phone conversation. Provide contact addresses, phone/fax numbers, and electronic mail addresses. One word of caution: government officials and staff are not necessarily as receptive to e-mail as you may believe. Proceed with caution, and use standard mail when in doubt.

Your association should have a listing of key members who stand ready and willing to use their knowledge and understanding of their national governments for the benefit of your interests.

Don't Give Up!

Even if the prospects of your interests being considered are bleak, never stop presenting your arguments publicly and respectfully. Government officials are always working to ensure that they encounter the least amount of resistance from interest groups. Do not give in! If your organization opposes a particular proposal, take every opportunity to show that you cannot accept the terms.

Conclusion

Advocacy is changing rapidly in today's world. More organizations are becoming involved in promoting their concerns and interests to government officials than ever before. If you are just beginning, make sure that the message your organization delivers will be remembered. If you have previously been involved in advocacy efforts, make regular assessments of the direction you are taking. Develop new ideas for generating interest in your cause, and seek new partnerships when possible. Make use of technology when feasible. Sell your interests with the idea that they are for the public good. Exhaust all possibilities, for you never know what may happen.

For more on advocacy education, contact:

IFLANet: <http://www.ifla.org>

Special Libraries Association: <http://www.sla.org>

American Library Association: <http://www.ala.org>

Australian Library and Information Association:
<http://alia.org.au>

European Bureau of Library, Information and
Documentation Associations:
<http://www.eblida.org>

Japan Special Libraries Association:
<http://www.jsla.or.jp>



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

Fédération Internationale
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Bibliotecarias

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Internationaler Verband
der Bibliothekarischen
Vereine und Institutionen

EXPANDING ADVOCACY IN THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY

Guidelines for Developing Government Relations without Borders

Management of Library Associations Section

<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s40/smla.htm>

Introduction

In order to promote the spread of knowledge, education and culture to all nations through the world, it is essential that all forms of information be allowed to flow freely. Not only will such access to information contribute to international understanding, it will also enable diversity of opinions to be recognized and respected and the mutual enrichment of cultures to be enhanced. From the IFLA Principles of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, 1997

As the information industry becomes more complex, governments increasingly are becoming involved at all levels. The outcome of policy debates will continue to impact libraries and information programs. Thus, library and information-related associations must play an active role in the formulation of laws and regulations. It is your association's role to inform and educate government officials from all levels of government on issues that are pertinent to the global information community.

Setting the Stage

To assist an association's members in advancing their advocacy role, each association should develop a government relations platform. This document should outline the mission, the goals and the specific activities that will be undertaken by the association. While the mission and goals should remain fairly constant, the activities should be constantly examined for relevance. The platform should include broad issue categories that will continually be of concern to the association, but should also incorporate goals concerning the range and scope of advocacy for the membership.

Taking Stock

Once an official platform is in place, an association should develop an inventory of skills and competencies that may be implemented for advocacy purposes. For example, if your association is staffed by volunteers, one member should be elected to lead the government relations efforts. If your

association is fortunate to have a government relations staff, their abilities should be considered the first line of defense or offense in an advocacy campaign. Veteran leaders and member-driven committees and networks can help initialize any issue advocacy campaign, since they are already organized and understand inter-association communications. Finally, since associations normally forge relationships with other organizations, such affiliations should be exploited to further similar interests in the development of global information policy.

The Call to Action

Whether your association is planning a strategy to enact legislation or reacting to a poorly crafted proposal, the time will come when you need to prepare your staff and membership for an advocacy campaign. If you have already developed an inventory of your total skills and competencies, you will be able to quickly assemble a team to begin work.

The first order of business will be to assess the goal of your advocacy efforts. If the goal is to convince government officials to enact a new law, your association will need to compile the positive points of your arguments so that the maximum amount of support may be generated. If your goal is to defeat a poorly crafted proposal, your association will need to develop a logical set of reasons for objecting to the proposal.

Framing the Issue

The next step is to devise a strategy for shaping public opinion. This is called framing the issue and no organization can go far in an advocacy campaign without it. If government officials can be convinced to support you early in the debate, less work will be required in the end. Creation and dissemination of a position paper on the matter at hand will shape your association's point of view.

The most effective way to frame an issue is to express concern over the impact of the matter on the general public. By making a case for your proposal or idea as

it relates to the average citizen in your country, your organization will be able to generate a broader level of support. If your organization has a proposal or a solution, it should be tied in to your efforts to general public support.

Going Public

Once you have created a framework for your association's viewpoint on an issue, that information needs to be publicized in every possible way. When possible, contact reporters from newspapers, periodicals, television and radio to enhance your advocacy campaign. Contacting trade press that covers your association's activities, promoting your concerns at other associations' meetings, speaking to civic groups, and other publicity efforts will only enhance your endeavors, thus gaining support for your issue.

If your organization has not previously developed a regular set of media and press contacts, this should be completed immediately. Finding reporters who are sympathetic to your organization's concerns will speed up the dissemination of your concerns and ideas.

Getting Help from Your Friends

Virtually all associations forge alliances with other associations. Such relationships must be exploited during advocacy campaigns. Government officials are more likely to consider the interest of a broad-based coalition than the needs of a focused interest group. Do not assume that such organizations must represent similar professions or interests. Many organizations with diverse constituencies often find common ground on an issue. Library associations should communicate with one another prior to making arrangements with other, non-library-oriented organizations. This will allow for a more unified voice, when possible, for the profession.

Competitive Intelligence

Although your organization may feel very confident with its position taken on an issue, the activities of any groups opposing your efforts should be carefully monitored. Organizations need to know and understand