Telling your story

2017 AASB FLY IN
MICHELLE EGAN, APR, FELLOW PRSA
“Every school board member has a story to tell. And it’s a story this country desperately needs. It is a story packed with human drama and emotion. If you don’t tell your story, somebody else will. And you’re probably not going to like it very much.”

-Nora Carr, NSPRA, Guilford County Schools, contributor to American School Board Journal
YOU are the messenger

- You are the expert
- You are credible
- You represent the same constituents
- You have to make difficult decisions
- Relationships matter most
- You have the tools

best
Resources

**Bradners’ Alaska Legislative Digest - Supplemental Commentary**

Publishers Tim and Mike Bradner, akdigest@gmail.com, (907) 440-6068 or (907) 242-6572

Your guide to LOBBYING the ALASKA LEGISLATURE
The state of trust
Edelman Trust Barometer, 2017

- 57% in US say the "system is not working," 33% uncertain
- 2/3 of public do not have confidence in current leaders
- Spontaneous > rehearsed
- Blunt/outspoken > polite/diplomatic
- Personal experiences > data
Peers Now as Credible as Experts

Percent who rate each spokesperson as extremely/very credible, and change from 2016 to 2017

"People in this country have had enough of experts."

—Michael Gove, Member of Parliament, U.K.

Source: 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer (2016-17) Below is a list of people. In general, when forming an opinion of a company, if you heard information about a company from each person, how credible would the information be — extremely credible, very credible, somewhat credible, or not credible at all? (Top 2 Box: Very/Extremely Credible) General Population, 28-country global total, question asked of half the sample.
Know your audience

- **Who are they?**
  - What area do they represent?
  - What’s their job outside the legislature?

- **What do they care about?**
  - What bills have they sponsored?
  - What committees are they on?
  - Where do they stand on our issues?
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Know your audience

- Select one person you will meet with
- Complete the audience worksheet
Message Mapping
Message Mapping

“A visual aid that provides at a glance the organization’s messages for high concern or controversial issues.” Dr. Vincent Covello, Ph.D

- Origins in risk communication, used
- A tool for the messenger
- Clear display of important points
- Simple and memorable
- One page visual guide
- Based on communication science
- Adapted by marketing and PR
Discuss common AASB position
Key messages & data
“Tell the legislator or committee ONE compelling fact. They are more likely to remember it and repeat it than if you give volumes of data.” – Legislative staffer

Presenter’s Paradox

► The “more is better” strategy hurts presenters.

► “Mildly favorable information dilutes the impact of highly favorable information.” (Journal of Consumer Research, Oct. 2012)
Develop & Deliver Key Messages

- Not more than 3 key messages or data points
- They support your position
- Consistent and easy to remember

**Powerful words to use for messages:** committed, dedicated, ensure, track-record, value, priority . . .
Develop & Deliver Key Messages
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- Tell one person your position and your key points (5 min)
- Gather as a group, choose three to share with the larger group (15)
Message Map

Position

Key Point or Fact

Key Point or Fact

Key Point or Fact

Story or Example
Storytelling
Storytelling

“Analysis might excite the mind, but it hardly offers a route to the heart. And that’s where you must go if you are to motivate people not only to take action, but to do so with energy and enthusiasm.”

-A Leader’s Guide to Storytelling, Stephen Denning
The Springboard Story

**Springboard stories communicate complex ideas and ignite action. They add an element of emotion to get people to change. It’s a “hero’s tale.”**

- Based on an actual example where change was successfully implemented.
- Told from protagonist position.
- Has time, place, setting.
- Makes it clear what would have happened without the change.
- Short, minimalist.
- Happy ending.
Exercise

- Jot down your own story or example
- Add details that make it interesting
- 10 minutes
- Story with a partner, feedback & adjust
- Sample stories
Short Conclusion
Message Map

Position

Key Point or Fact

Key Point or Fact

Key Point or Fact

Story or Example

Short Conclusion
Conclusion starters...

- The most important issue for us is...
- It’s important to remember...
- We are all aligned on ....
- I want to emphasize...
- We appreciate your support for ...
  because...
Putting it all together
Exercise

- Finish your message map
- Meet as a district
- Talk through your message map
- Get feedback and adjust
Bridging

- I can't answer/talk about that . . . but
- What I can tell you is . . .
- The most important fact that you need to know is...
- Let me put it in perspective...
- What's important to remember, however...
- What I really want to talk to you about is...
- The three most important issues are...
- And don't forget...
Advocacy Tips
In-Person Meeting

- Know your legislator
- Be on time, stay on schedule
- Use formal titles
- Say thank you
- Get to the point
- Stay on message

- Ask questions
- Respect the office
- Respect the staff
- Be flexible
- Follow up with additional info
- Send thank you notes