



# Successful Advocacy: Working with Legislators

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# Disclosure

- Financial-I am an ASHA employee
- Nonfinancial-I support ASHA's public policy initiatives and serve as the ex-officio to ASHA's School Finance Committee

# Agenda

- Background --Advocacy
  - Define Advocacy
  - Why it is important and what are the benefits?
- Game Plan
  - Establish a grassroots advocacy network
  - Working with lobbyists
  - Work with the legislature
  - Negotiation
  - Leverage the media
  - Utilize ASHA resources



# • Advocacy

# What is Advocacy?

- **Advocacy** is a political process by an individual or a large group which normally aims to influence public-policy
- An **advocate is a person** who works effectively to bring about positive change
- **Grassroots advocacy** is an organized way to achieve change that benefits a group (professionals, consumers)
- Grassroots advocacy involves:
  - Organizing groups of individuals with common interests
  - Providing information to decision makers to help them make informed decisions

# Why is Advocacy Important?

- It empowers and accomplishes goals
- It provides the opportunity to participate in government and local decision making
- It is part of the ASHA Code of Ethics
- It is your right...  
    You have the right to Advocate!

# What are the Benefits of Being an Advocate?

- Advocates are in a unique position to:
- Educate legislators about issues of concern
- Share knowledge on an issue's impact in the local area
- Help legislators, regulators, and other decision makers understand how audiology and speech-language pathology services improve the quality of life for their constituents

# Game Plan



# Develop a Plan of Action

- Identify issues and set priorities
  - Survey the group
  - Set advocacy goals
- Develop timeframes for achieving the goals

# Develop a Plan of Action

- Identify the factors necessary for change
- Is your issue a priority for the leadership?
- Are there sufficient financial resources available to achieve the goal?
- Is there significant opposition to your plan?

# Develop a Plan of Action

- Identify Key Decision Makers
  - Legislators on committees of jurisdiction
  - Regulators or insurers
  - Determine their level of support or opposition
  - Evaluate the political climate for change
  - Determine the activities/actions needed to garner support



# Establish a Grassroots Advocacy Network

# Establish a Grassroots Advocacy Network

- Recruit advocates: Like-minded members, key contacts in legislative districts
- Establish a database to keep track of your contacts
- Develop a system to communicate with network members

- Working with a lobbyist

# WORKING WITH A LOBBYIST

- The Association Relationship
  - Establish method and frequency of communication
  - Lobbyist responsibility for monitoring legislation
  - Communication with Executive Board or Legislative Committee
  - Discuss pros/cons of legislation and arrive at the association's position on a bill
  - Develop fact sheet/talking points
  - Lobbyist communicates the association's position to legislators
  - Communicate concerns or support to bill sponsor
  - Lobby members of committee of jurisdiction and staff
  - Provide feedback through frequent contact with association

# The Lobbyist – Association Relationship

- Meet with association to understand legislative objective
- Drafting legislation
- Preparation of fact sheet and supporting documents
- Identification of allies and opponents
- Coalition building
- Identification of bill sponsors/co-sponsors
- Influence committee assignment – lobby committee
- Lobby non-committee members of legislature
- Follow same procedure in second chamber



# Work with the Legislature

# Work with the Legislature

- Understand your audience
- Know the political views and policy interests
- Learn about the legislator's constituent base
- Identify his/her committee assignments
- Read their biographies and identify personal interests
- Determine their political agenda

# Work with the Legislature

- Learn the best way to “influence” decision makers
  - Face-to-face conversations are best
  - Letters need to be original
  - Telephone calls and e-mail also work

“What works best is personal thoughtful communication.”

*Blackwell, 2001*

# Work with the Legislature

- Plan a Visit
  - Prepare a fact sheet and talking points that provide background information, data, and facts to support your position
  - Invite a consumer or plan to share a personal story during your visit
  - Create a handout or other “leave behind” with contact information to provide them

# Work with the Legislature

- Make an appointment and be on time
  - Expect that the legislator may be late so prepare a long (5 minute) and short (1 minute) message that:
    - Defines the issue
    - Supports your position
    - Includes an “ask”

# Deliver the Message

- When delivering your message, be sure to:
  - Be accurate and concise; don't get off message
  - Use facts and data to support your position
  - Eliminate jargon
  - Ask for support and wait for a reply
  - Share a personal story
  - Be positive and courteous even if your positions differ
  - Promise to follow-up with answers to questions you don't know
  - Don't overstay your welcome

# Work with the Legislature

- After the Meeting
- Write a personal thank you note
- Inform your group of the results
- Remember to get back to the legislator with answers to questions you didn't know

A large teal circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, containing the text 'Let's review' in white.

• Let's review

When meeting with a legislator or decision maker you should:

- Develop your plan (What's your objective?)
- Identify the decision makers and timelines for decisions
- Develop your message and "leave behind"
- Deliver your message and be sure to tell a story
- Include an "Ask" and wait for an answer
- Be prepared to be patient but persistent- change doesn't happen quickly
- Report the results of your interaction to your team

Have fun!



Effective Negotiation:

**THE ART OF WOO**

*Richard Shell & Mario Moussa*

# Negotiation

Grab your audience's attention by making it  
**VIVID**

# Put Your Heart Into It

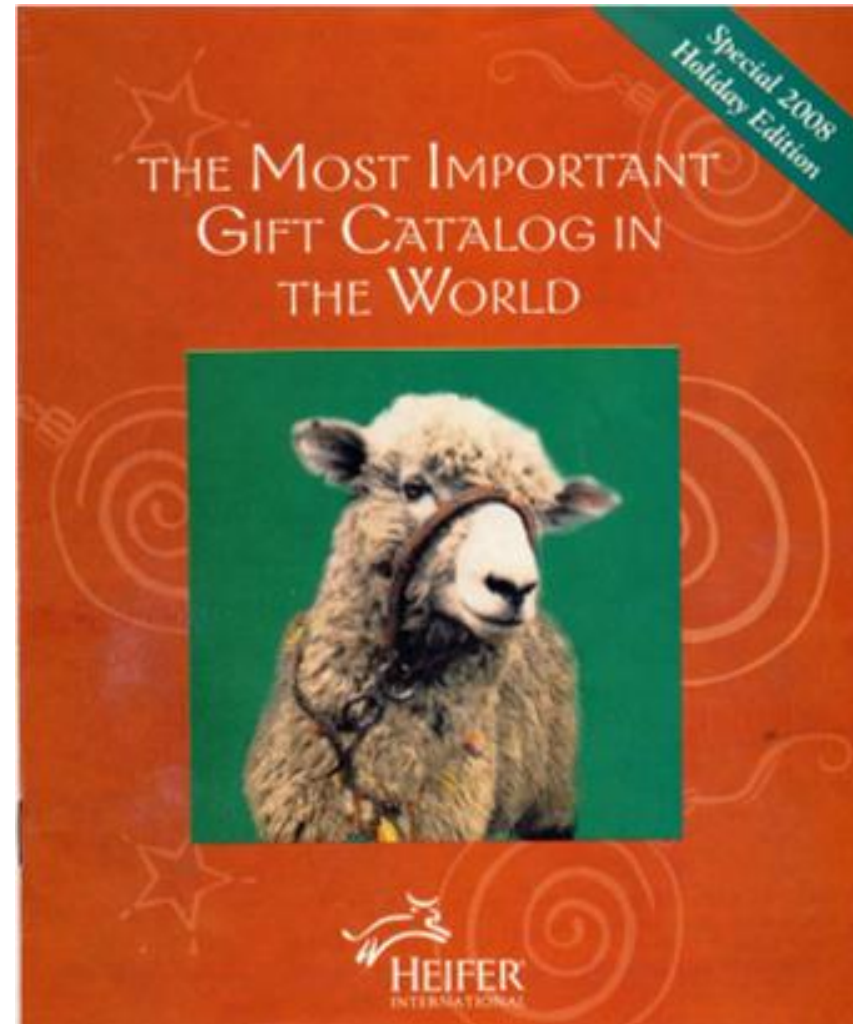


# Negotiation

- Grabbing Your Audience Attention
- Tell A Story
- Personalize it



# Negotiation



# Grabbing your Audience's Attention

couldn't afford even simple materials.

Then, Nancy received a dairy cow from Heifer International which provided milk for her family to drink and enough surplus to sell for a steady income. With profits from the milk, Nancy was able to buy metal for a new roof for their house, and bricks and mortar to repair its walls.

With patience and perseverance — plus some help from Heifer International — families like Nancy's all over the world are realizing their dreams for a brighter future.



## Milk Menagerie

**Gift of a Milk Menagerie: \$1,000**

**Share of a Milk Menagerie: \$100**

The gift of a Milk Menagerie represents a quality-breed heifer, two goats and a water buffalo — four milk-producing animals for hardworking families hoping to provide a better life for their children. With training for recipient families, each animal in the Menagerie will produce gallon after gallon of wonderful, life-sustaining milk.

# Negotiation

- Force your Audience to Think
  - Questioning the Obvious
  - Reversals
  - Let's Pretend
  - Reconceptualize

# Leverage the Media



# Leverage the Media

- Locate a reporter that covers your issues, (e.g., health care, education)
- Determine what reporters want
- Become a valuable resource
- Develop a tip sheet
- Facilitate a long-term relationship

# Leverage the Media

- Contact the media to gain or maintain visibility
- Develop a media plan
  - Develop a calendar of events
  - Create a list of potential sources and contacts
- Develop a “newsworthy” story
  - Key factors
  - The “angle”
  - Timing
  - Uniqueness
  - Broad audience appeal

# Get Involved with MSHA

- Share your concerns
- Offer to serve on advocacy committees
- Contact MSHA:
  - Michigan Speech-Language- Hearing Association
  - 790 E. Lansing Road, Suite 400
  - East Lansing, MI 48823
  - 517-332-5691
  - [msha@att.net](mailto:msha@att.net)
  - Greg Spray, President

# Get involved with ASHA

- Contact your state liaison to learn how to get involved:
- Janet Deppe
  - [jdeppe@asha.org](mailto:jdeppe@asha.org)
  - 301-296-5668

# Utilize ASHA Resources

- Use ASHA's e-advocacy tool
- Develop advocacy messages and send an e-mail blast
- Get assistance from ASHA state liaisons to create legislative and regulatory messages to member advocates
- Apply for a grant: state grant applications for are available to state associations in first quarter of each year. For further information go to: <https://www.asha.org/Advocacy/stateleaders/ASHA-State-Grants--Procedures-and-Guidelines/>