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FIVE ELEMENTS OF A LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGN

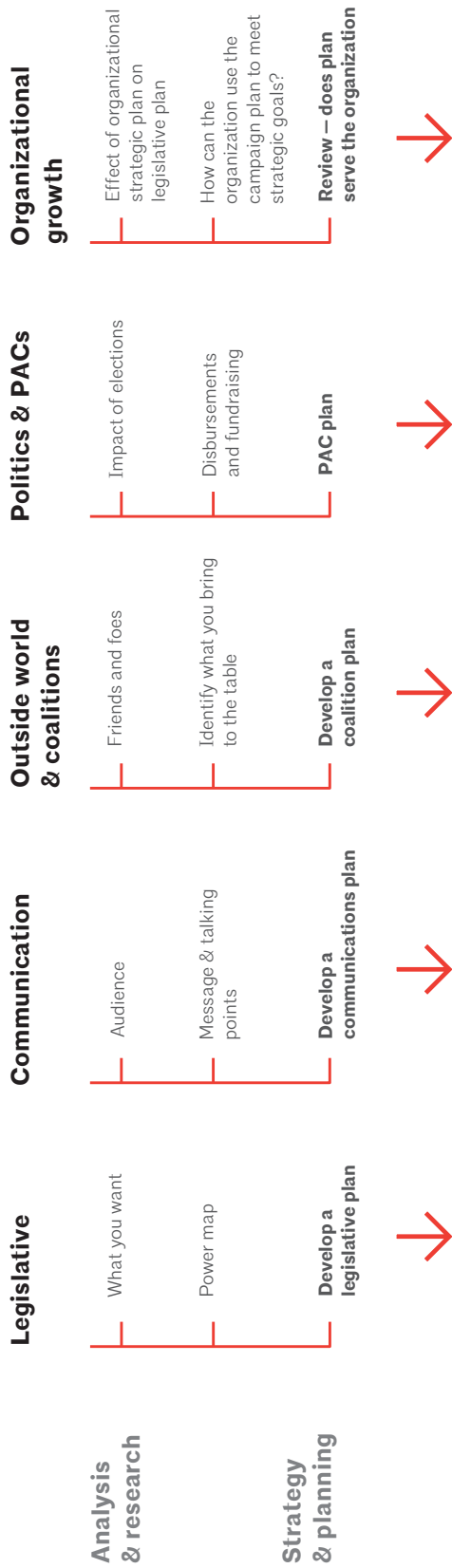
Building a campaign to win a policy issue requires several crucial elements: research, a winning message, reliable allies, knowledge of the legislative and political landscape, and teamwork. More than anything else, it requires a strong organizational strategy. Organization is key to all kinds of operations, but is especially important in legislative and political advocacy work. Without organization, you run the risk of missing opportunities and having to play catch-up when threats arise. With organization, your group can be focused, unified, proactive and effective. Whatever your policy goal is—whether it's advancing a good idea or defeating a bad one—understanding and using these five elements will help you achieve that goal.

Together, these five elements create the organizational framework that will help you and your organization become more strategic, purposeful and organized as you work toward positive legislative and political outcomes.

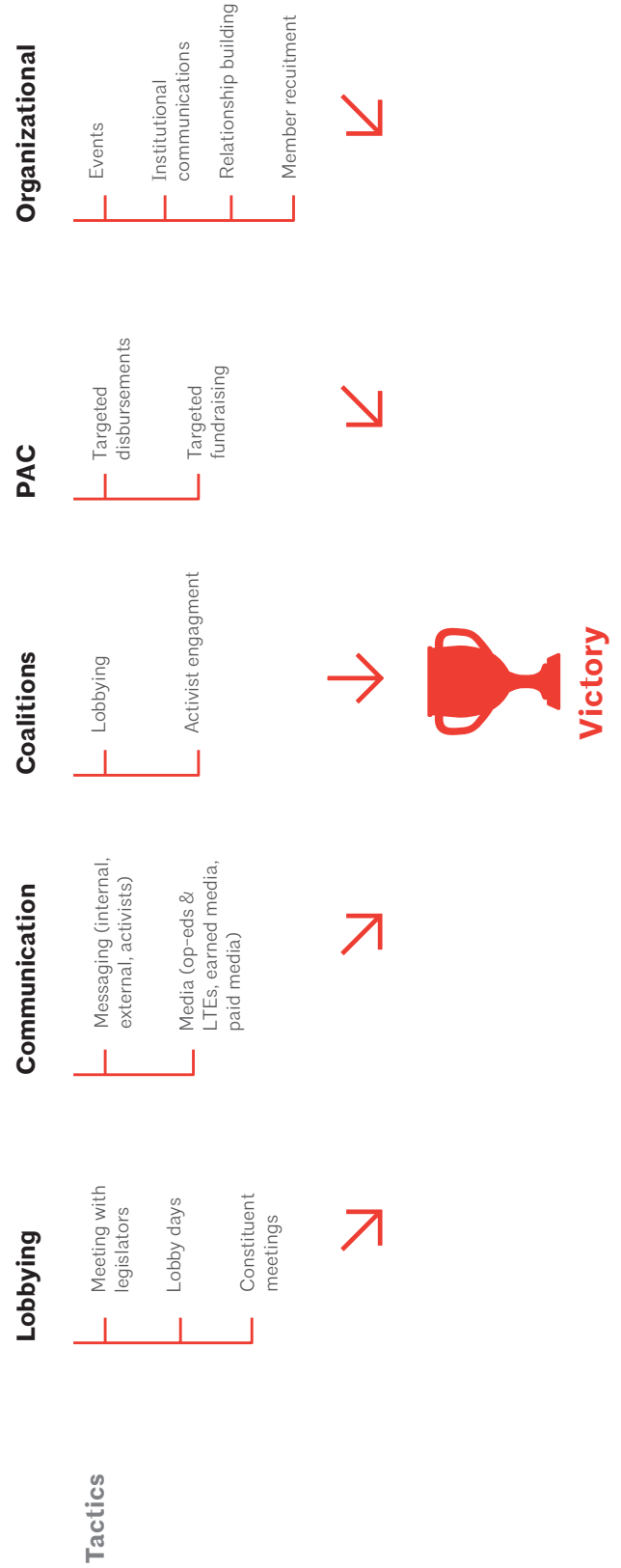
The Five Elements of a Campaign

1. **Legislative Strategy.** Determining who holds the levers of power and how you gain access to them to make your case in support of your goal.
2. **Message Development and Communications.** Making your case to achieve your goal.
3. **Allies and Coalitions.** Working with others who share similar views to achieve your goal.
4. **Elections and PACs.** Using the political campaign process can help you achieve your goal.
5. **Organizational Growth.** Planning how the campaign will help grow and strengthen your organization (i.e., the AIA).

CAMPAIGN PLANNING DIAGRAM



Combine to create a legislative campaign plan



LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

If your goal is to get a good bill passed (or a bad bill defeated), then the first step is knowing who has the power to make that happen. Unfortunately, the AIA cannot walk into the state house or U.S. Capitol and vote for a bill. Only your elected representatives can do that.

A strong legislative strategy is the linchpin of your legislative campaign. The best messaging and the strongest coalitions in the world will not matter unless they help you convince the key decision makers to take your side.

TIP: Congress and state legislatures are organized into committees (where much of the heavy lifting of legislation takes place), which are further organized around different policy issues. Typically, the representatives who sit on a particular committee will have the most influence over legislation before that committee, so they are usually the top targets for making your case. Ultimately, all members of the legislative body will get to vote on a bill, so you can't ignore them. And don't forget about leadership; the party leaders and speakers of the House have great sway over which bills come before the body.

Building a strong legislative strategy requires three key things: research, targeting and an action plan.

Research

If you're going to advocate effectively for an issue, you and everyone else involved has to learn as much about the issue as possible. Chances are, the legislators know far less about your issue than you do (and perhaps nothing at all). Most legislatures deal with hundreds, if not thousands, of issues every session. Unless you can clearly identify the problem, why it matters, and why they should seek a solution, they are unlikely to take it up.

In addition, you need to know who holds the levers of power. A junior legislator who is not on the relevant committee might be a good champion of your issue, but he or she will not have as much ability to advance the issue as a more senior member of the relevant committee. Knowing who has the most leverage on the issue matters.

Here are the steps to finding this information:

Identify the Issue

- What is the problem?
- Why does it need to be fixed?
- What are the ramifications of inaction?
 - To architects
 - To society
- Is there research/statistics that support your case?
- Are there personal stories/anecdotes that bolster your case?
- Are other people/groups concerned about the problem, and who?
- Has the AIA (national, state, local) addressed, or is it aware of, the solution?

Identify the Solution

- What is the solution (i.e., the bill or action)?
- How will the solution address the problem?
 - How will it help architects?
 - How will it help society?
- Is there a fiscal impact?
- Is there available research/statistics that support the solution?
- Are there other benefits that will come about because of the solution?
- Has this effort been tried in the past? Where? What was the outcome?
- Who will oppose the solution and why?
- What are the arguments against the solution, and your counterarguments?
- Does the national and state AIA support the position?

Policy Environment

- Who has the power to put your solution into action (legislature, executive branch, local government, voters)?
 - Are there subgroups (legislative committee, executive agency, etc.) that will have influence over the solution? Who are the members of those subgroups?
 - What share of the group do you need to support your position to win (e.g., the majority of a committee, just the agency head, etc.)?
 - Who influences the people you need to influence (e.g., a governor who oversees an agency)?
- What do you need this group to do (i.e., vote for/against a bill, amend a bill, provide funding, change a regulation, speak out publicly, stay neutral, etc.)?
- Is there a set time frame or deadline for action (legislative session, election, meeting date)?
- Are there other “hot issues” that may impact the discussion (other legislation on a similar topic, large political controversies, elections, etc.)?

Targeting

Once you have completed your research, you need to determine your campaign targets: those people with the power to decide the outcome of your issue, and those who influence them.

Your research efforts have determined which group can enact your solution, whom you need to win over in that group, and who influences them. Targeting will help you identify members of the group most and least likely to support you and prioritize members you have the best chance of converting to your side.

TIP: If you need to gain the support of a majority of a 40-member legislative committee, you don't need all 40 members on your side; you need 21.

Because not all targets are alike, this priority-setting exercise helps you determine how to assign resources and time. For example, it may not be wise to spend time trying to convince certain legislators to support your issue if they have publicly stated they will oppose it. Similarly, if a target is a champion of your issue, you certainly want to keep that person informed and engaged – and maybe even ask for help as long as it doesn't require a ton of time and resources. However, you should not expend a lot of effort on them if they are already on your side.

You should focus on high priority targets who you think may vote with you if you apply the right kind of effort and resources.

Step 1: Identify your targets

Your first step is to identify the universe of decision makers and learn as much as you can about their views on your issue.

Questions to answer:

- Who in the group might you convince, and what will convince them?
- Who are the other key players (other associations, interest groups, companies, etc.) that could influence the discussion? What are their positions on your issue?
- Who has more power on the committee? (In general, lists of committee members show them in declining order of seniority, from the chair to the newest members)
- Are there others who are willing to take up your issue as a personal cause?

Step 2: Rank and prioritize your targets

Once you've identified where your targets stand on your issue, your next task is to rank them in order of priority.

High priority: People who are undecided, are potentially persuadable, and have more influence in the deciding body. Your highest priority targets are those you believe may be persuadable. Spend the most time and resources on these targets.

Tip: Who on the committee is close with the governor, or the leadership of the body? Those individuals may have more clout and help you advance your issue further down the line.

Medium priority: People who are leaning one way or the other, or those who already are on your side or your champions.

Low priority: People who are steadfast against you.

Step 3: Research your top priority targets

Once you have a target list, determine what you need to know about your most persuadable (high priority) targets.

- What are your target's policy priorities?
- Which issues do they care about?
- Which issues are they indifferent to?
- What do they want their legacy to be?
- Have they made public statements about your issue?
- What is your target's past experience with your issue?
- What is the target's background with your organization?
- What is your target's previous (or current, if a state legislator) profession?
- Is your target considering running for higher office in the future?
- Where is your target's home community or district, and how does your issue impact it directly?

(see worksheet 1 in the back)

Step 4: Power mapping priority targets

Power mapping is a framework for identifying people and groups that have influence with your target, also known as influencers. A power map is literally a visual map of relationships between people, organizations, and institutions and your target, revealing available avenues of influence.

Power mapping is particularly helpful in determining how to leverage your existing relationships, engage your members and identify others that can influence your target. Power mapping works best on your most persuadable (i.e., high priority) targets. The method allows you to see how a particular target is influenced, and how those influencers may overlap with your organization and members.

TIP: In all cases, the people with the most influence over a legislator are those who live (and vote) in her or her district. They should always be your first stop in developing a power map.

For example, your organization may want a particular state legislator to sponsor a bill. Understanding the professional and personal relationships your state legislator has within his or her district can help you strengthen your relationship with that person. You might discover that one of the district's largest companies has a stake in the issue to which your bill pertains or that an AIA member is connected to that legislator through another organization. Leveraging that company or your AIA member's relationship may help you make a stronger case to your targeted legislator.

Power Mapping Step-by-Step

A power map is a visual tool and thus should be drawn. The map starts with a person or institution you want to influence: this is your target. From there, move outward, identifying people and groups with whom your target has a connection.

(see Power Mapping chart on page 11)

What are you looking for? People who have connections to your target that you can leverage.

- A person with a powerful voice in the community
- A constituent
- A donor
- A friend, colleague or staff member
- A person who has the ear of your target and is a trusted source

Step 1: Identify spheres of influence

Identify the major parts of your target's work life: work, politics, community, affiliations and neighborhood.

Step 2: Identify Influencers in those spheres. Looking at each sphere of influence determine the people that have influence with the target and what they might do to move the target to your position.

- *Be Thorough.* Think of all the groups who have a relationship with this target. Think broadly.
- *Be creative.* Even if you decide not to use the information you put on the map, it may give you ideas for other avenues of influence.
- *Be strategic.* Explore all the major donors and constituency groups. Do some research. Spend time thinking about your target from different angles.

Questions to Identify Influencers:

- Who does the target work with on a daily basis?
 - Fellow legislators or committee members
 - People in other branches of government
 - Staffers
- Is the target influenced by the media?
 - National, state and local papers, especially particular reporters who cover the target
 - Community bloggers
- Who does the target engage in the larger community?
 - Campaign donors
 - Key interest groups or associations
 - Community groups and businesses
- What other jobs/positions does the target hold or held previously?
 - Other government bodies
 - Former/present companies/employers
 - Boards of companies, organizations, charitable groups
- Who in the AIA universe does the target know?
 - AIA staff/members and/or AIA contract lobbyists
 - Architecture firms
 - Architects with whom the target may have worked (home renovation, business contract)
 - Other companies, associations or individuals in the A/E profession
 - Community groups that engage with the built environment (environmental groups, chambers of commerce, community design centers, universities with architecture schools, school districts, healthcare facilities, or companies that have recently worked with architects)
- What are the issues and groups the target cares about or works with on a regular basis?
 - Local issues (redevelopment, environment, disaster recovery)
 - Groups that engage in the political process (labor unions, chambers of commerce)
 - Charities
 - Local Civic Groups (Kiwanis, VFW, garden clubs, community associations, Boy/Girl Scouts, boys/girls clubs, homeowners associations)
- Does the target aspire to higher office?

Step 3: Review the influencers and their connections to AIA

Review the networks that you have created and determine any connections among influencers. Do they have relationships with other targets or influencers? Some of the people and institutions will not only connect to your target, but also to each other and possibly directly to you or the AIA. Power mapping sometimes reveals surprises.

Step 4: Organize the map

Now you can organize influencers into logical categories, prioritize and determine which people are best to contact in terms of workload and return on investment (see Power Mapping Worksheet).

Step 5: Complete the influencer call sheet

This will help you organize the plan for each target.

Information to Include:

- Type of direct contact you will have with the target
 - Meeting with AIA staff/leaders
 - Lobbyist visit
 - Meeting with AIA members from the district
 - Testimony to committee
- Influencers for each target
 - What do you want each influencer to do (e.g., make a call, write a letter, go to a meeting, testify, letter to the editor, etc.)?
 - Who is the best person(s) to contact the influencer?
 - What is the best way to access the influencer (phone, email, meeting, etc.)?
 - What will you give to the influencer if he/she agrees to help (contact information, detailed instructions, talking points, white paper, FAQs, etc.)?

(see worksheet 2 in the back)

(see Power Mapping chart on page 11)

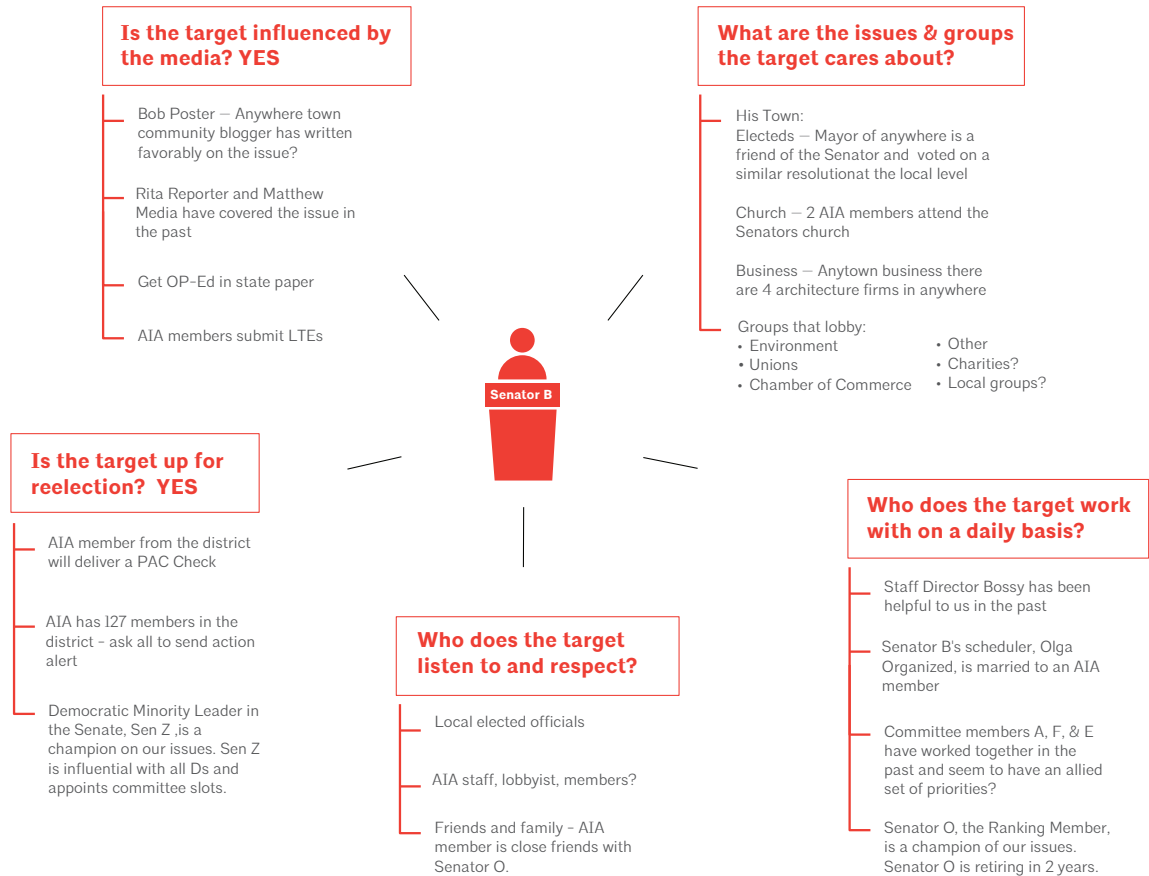
SENATOR B POWER MAPPING EXAMPLE

Step 1: Spheres of influence

- Work
- Politics
- Affiliations
- Neighborhood
- Religion
- Family
- Charities

Step 2:
Determine the influencers

Step 3:
Review the influencers and their connections to AIA



Step 4 & 5: Organize the map & set up influencer call sheet

Influencer	What do we need them to do?	Overlap with other targets	Priority	AIA contact for outreach
Olga Organized married to AIA member	Ask her spouse to talk about the issue and ask her to get us a meeting with Senator B	No	high	Ex. Dir. to call AIA member
Mayor of Anytown	Call Sen B, ask to support bill (like one he passed) and talk about benefits of that bill	Yes with Rep J	high	AIA Member V call

Action plan

The power map is a key step in developing your campaign strategy. After the power map and target worksheets are completed, use them to decide how and where to take action.

Create a target action plan for all of your targets. (Excel is a good application for this)

- List all of your targets in priority order
- Note your plan for each target

Target Action Plan (diagram 2 below)

House committee	Party	Targets - need 10 votes for passage	Ranking on bill	Outreach target level	Actions
Support my goal					All medium targets: Provide status updates, AIA members from district send thank you for your support emails
	D	Rep. B	Strongly support	Medium	
	D	Rep. C	Strongly support	Medium	Ask Rep A and S to support bill
	D	Rep. H	Strongly support	Medium	
	R	Rep. I	Strongly support	Medium	Ask ranking member to support bill
	R	Rep. L	Strongly support	Medium	Ask ranking member to support bill
	D	Rep. M	Strongly support	Medium	
Persuadable towards my goal or unsure					
	D	Rep. X - committee ranking member	Lean support	High	See individual plan
	D	Rep. A	Lean support	High	See individual plan
	D	Rep. U	Don't know	High	See individual plan
	D	Rep. P	Don't know	High	See individual plan
	R	Rep. S	Lean support	High	See individual plan
	R	Rep. J	Don't know	High	See individual plan
	R	Rep. F	Don't know	High	See individual plan
Oppose my goal - Not a target					No action, watch all for active opposition
	R	Rep U - committee chair	Lean oppose	Medium	
	R	Rep. U	Lean oppose	High	
	R	Rep. J	Strongly oppose	Low	
	R	Rep. K	Strongly oppose	Low	
	R	Rep. D	Strongly oppose		

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Now that you have figured out what you want to achieve and which levers of power you need to pull, you need to determine how to persuade your targets to see your point of view. Crafting the right message—and choosing the right ways to spread your message—can make the difference between a winning and losing campaign.

Message development

It's not unusual to hear the term "messaging" thrown around in ways that make it sound abstract and esoteric. It's not. There are several reasons why a clear and specific message is so important:

- A clear message is easier for your targets and the public to understand, especially if they are unfamiliar with the issue.
- A clearer message makes it less likely that the public, the media and policymakers will misinterpret what you support, and harder for your opponents to counter it.
- A specific and concise message is more likely to be heard favorably by your targets, especially if your message includes a specific request for action (e.g., support this bill, vote against the Smith amendment, etc.). People dislike ambiguity; if there is an action they can take that will benefit society (and for which they can take credit) they're more apt to favor it.
- An advocacy effort must speak with a single voice to break through the clutter of information that constantly bombards policymakers and the public. A clear and specific message on which everyone agrees makes that possible.
- A well-defined message is easier to pass on to your allies, easier for them to understand, and less likely to be misstated.

Crafting an effective message need not be complicated. You need to be specific and crystal-clear about what you're advocating, whether it's for funding, legislative language, a change in policy, or recognition of a particular need or concern.

When developing a message, using this simple structure will help you reach your goal.

- What's the point? An effective message requires precisely identifying the heart of the issue you're advocating, and not getting distracted by side issues. Lose sight of the point and you lose sight of the message.
- Why does it matter? Why should people care about the problem you've identified and work toward the solution you've proposed? Your message should resonate with—and be relevant to—your target audience, inspiring them to act and take your side. If your audience is non-architects, don't just talk about how the problem affects architects; share how it impacts the community.
- What are you offering? Legislation can be complex; if you can't describe your solution in clear, accessible language, you risk losing your audience. What is the practical, real-world impact of the solutions you're proposing? Remember: the ultimate goal is not to pass a bill; it's to improve the world. Focus on the outcomes that impact people's lives.
- What do you want your audience to do? Make sure to tell your audience (legislator, reporter, AIA members, the public) what you want them to do.

Questions to ask when developing a message:

- Read it like a skeptic. When you're crafting a message, ask yourself if your arguments are logical. Is the message supported by enough facts to make a strong case? Do solutions directly address the problem? Do they sound feasible in the current economic and political climate?
- Know your audience. Different audiences respond to different cues. A policymaker is looking for a straightforward (and politically amenable) solution. A reporter is looking for a compelling story. Avoid forcing your message to cover everything for everyone because, often, that just leads to confusion. It's perfectly acceptable to modify your message to meet your audience as long as the central theme is consistent.
- Get out of your own head. Remember you are an expert in your area; most of the people who will receive your message (elected officials, media, and the general public) are not. Don't be overly technical, and never use archi-speak.
- Keep it short and memorable. Winning messages are the ones that people can repeat because they are short (they can be expressed in less than 30 seconds) and use crisp, clear language.
- Test your message. Messages conceived in a vacuum, without the benefit of others' perspectives, experience and wisdom often fail. "Truth-testing" your message and using the input of others will illuminate weak spots and strengthen your ultimate result.

(see worksheet 3 in the back)

DEALING WITH THE OPPOSITION

You can have the best, most effective campaign message in the world. However, if you're not prepared for what your opponents will say, your message could be demolished. Being nimble and proactive to opposition is critical to winning support for your issue. This means you have to think like your opponents, anticipate their counter-arguments, and develop responses that neutralize them.

Answering these questions will enable you to craft messages and provide information to the media that counter your opposition. It will provide information that helps you target legislators and identify allies you may not have known were available.

TIP: Honesty is critical to the long-term success of your advocacy efforts. If you can't respond to an argument against your position, either rethink your position or offer to work toward solutions with your opponents.

Questions to ask when developing an opposition message:

- Who opposes my goal?
- Why do they oppose my goal?
- What are the arguments against my goal?
- If others have tried to advance my goal in the past (say, in other states), what did their opponents say, and how did supporters counter their arguments?
- What are the point-for-point answers to their arguments?

Sample Message: Designing buildings so they can weather dangerous storms saves money and lives. But many Americans live, work and go to school in buildings that are not safe. H.R. 1748, the Safe Building Codes Incentive Act, will encourage communities to adopt better building codes to make sure that our buildings can weather a storm. Please cosponsor H.R. 1748 to help ensure that people are safe from dangerous weather.

Communication tools

Once you have developed your message, you need to get it out to your audiences. There are a number of communications tools for disseminating your message. Knowing the right kinds of tools to use can make the difference between success and failure.

Each of the communications tools below has a different purpose, audience and content.

Purpose: What will the tool accomplish? Are you trying to convince a skeptical lawmaker about why he/she should support you? Are you trying to motivate and inspire potential champions? To explain to legislative staff or legal counsel why certain details in your solution matter? A communications document that doesn't have a clear purpose will likely end up unused on your website or in a computer file.

Audience: Who are you trying to reach? A policy specialist will want to see a far different amount of information than a reporter. And a legislator will respond to different kinds of information than a community group.

Content: As discussed earlier, you should be able to describe your goal in a few words or sentences. But in a legislative debate, there are always plenty of details you need to address. Your communications tools should provide a mix of content density, depending on the audience and purpose.

Here are some of the tools that the AIA uses in its legislative efforts:

- **One-page fact sheets.** These are simple, at-a-glance documents that benefit from good design.
 - **Purpose:** Explains the issue in clear, concise language while presenting the reader with the facts.
 - **Audience:** Policymakers, the media, your members, the public. Fact sheets provide the big picture of why the issue matters and why your proposed solution will make a difference.
 - **Content:** Concise sentences are imperative here. Bullet points and factual statements, along with graphics, support your message with less text.
- **White papers.** White papers are longer documents that lay out an issue in greater detail, using as many relevant facts and arguments as possible.
 - **Purpose.** To introduce a new issue or problem, provide a complete picture of an issue and address any concerns that your solution might raise.
 - **Audience.** People who will want to see the full picture, including policy experts in the legislature or agency. In addition, potential allies may want to see the white paper to ensure that the problem and solutions align fully with their interests.
 - **Format.** A white paper can be as long as it needs to be. Just make sure the information you include is relevant to the topic. It should be clearly separated into distinct sections, with an appendix if needed for additional information. If it is going to reside online, a white paper can include links to additional resources. An executive summary is important in a long white paper because it gives the reader an up-front overview of the big ideas.

- **Model Legislation.** Only elected representatives can introduce bills in a legislature. However, advocacy groups can propose specific language that legislators use to shape their bill. This has the advantage of ensuring you express the details of your solution exactly as you want. If you develop model legislative language, you should have a lawyer or experienced policy expert develop it so that it passes the “smell test” with legislators.
 - Purpose: To provide exact, specific ideas on how your solution should work and give legislators a working model.
 - Audience: Policy experts, legislators and legislative or regulatory staff, who need to delve into the nitty-gritty details of a policy proposal.
 - Content: Something that is called “model legislation” should be just that: legislation. It should read like a bill. If it is merely a detailed summary of your solution, then you should call it a “summary.”

- **Issue Brief.** An issue brief is a short document (usually one page, but no more than two) that provides a narrative about the problem, why you believe it’s worthy of discussion, and the solution. It also should include, very prominently, the “ask” you are making (e.g., support HB7 or vote against the Smith amendment).
 - Purpose: To provide potential champions (in the legislative or agency, potential allies, others) a clear overview of the issue and the solution in plain English that avoids delving too deeply in the details.
 - Audience: Policymakers, their staff and other organizations are the primary audiences. It may also help you explain the issue to the media or to members and potential coalition partners.
 - Content: Issue briefs should tell a story about the problem and solution. Unlike fact sheets, they can reference specific legislation without going into exhaustive detail, as well as some key facts that bolster your case. Issue briefs should provide a clear ask.

- **Talking Points.** Talking points are a set of bulleted statements that your supporters can use to pitch your proposal to legislators or other targets about an issue. Note that, when used effectively, talking points are not read verbatim, but are used as a reference document on which to base a pitch. Think of them as notes for a speech or talk. Finding the right balance of providing enough information to help the user make a good case without getting buried under too many facts and figures takes some testing.
 - Purpose: A tool for your advocates to help them make a strong case for your goal.
 - Audience. Individuals who are going to be pitching your goal. Although they are not intended for outsider use, they often find their way into the hands of policymakers, the media, etc., so it’s important to avoid placing proprietary information in them.
 - Content. Talking points should be written in narrative form. Consider your main message: the problem, why it matters, and your solution. The main bullet points should be the key points you want your advocates to use. Sub bullet points are for additional, supplementary information they can add if there’s time and opportunity. Remember to make the ask very clear.

- **FAQs.** These can be used to address any questions you and your advocates might receive about your solution and could include questions about the policy details and impact, the political prospects for your solution, and concerns raised by opponents of your proposal. FAQs enable you to provide information and context that might not fit into an issue brief or talking points, and they help ensure your advocates are responding to questions and possible options with the same messages. They also demonstrate your responsiveness and openness to questions and concerns.
 - Purpose: To provide both your advocates and potential champions with ways of answering potentially difficult questions about your proposal.
 - Audience. Ideally, FAQs can be shared with anyone. For your advocates, they are a tool for answering questions and concerns. But you also can post them online so that anyone (policymakers, the media, the public) can access them.
 - Content. They should ask the questions you are getting, with the answers concisely provided below. If there are questions about both the policy and the politics of the issue, consider breaking those out into different sections.

TIP: When developing written materials, it is good to apply the “Washington Post front page rule”: If your material ends up on the front page of a major newspaper (or website, blog, etc.), will it embarrass you or hurt your efforts? If you have confidential or strategic information, make sure that it is tightly controlled (or don’t put it into writing at all).

Communications platforms

You developed a winning message and crafted effective one-pagers, issue briefs, and talking points that make your pitch. How do you ensure that the right content gets into the right hands?

The methods, or platforms, you can use to deliver communications content vary depending on the audience.

Member Communications

In an organization’s advocacy effort, nothing is more critical than giving your members the most up-to-date information and resources to help them advocate. A strong member communications system helps you motivate and activate your corps of advocates, keeps them informed of the latest developments, and helps you track which of your members are your most active advocates.

It’s critical that you have a fast and reliable way to disseminate information to everyone who needs it.

Email is still one of the best communications tools because it is instantaneous and can reach large numbers of people with a single keystroke. A well-maintained website with an email link may also be an excellent—and nearly instantaneous—source of information. Increasingly, social media is a very effective way to get your messages out.

TIP: The AIA uses a software system called Vocus that enables the AIA federal relations team and state components to send an “action alert” to AIA members, asking them to contact their elected officials on an issue. Vocus syncs AIA members to their federal and state legislative districts, so that members can send messages directly to their representatives in just a few clicks.

Social Media

Social media is a great tool for enhancing a legislative campaign. Use social media to communicate with both members and the general public who are interested in the legislative topic.

Hashtags on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are vital when targeting specific audiences. Search for hashtags related to your legislative topic and use in messages. You might also want to develop a short hashtag and ask members to share their own messages, using that hashtag.

Using social media to communicate to specific audiences

- Decision makers and speakers
 - List the decision makers and speakers you would like to see your message.
 - Search online for each person's Twitter handle as Twitter is an effective way to connect with this group.
 - Use your search engine to search for "[Fill in decision maker's name] Twitter name."
 - Create a campaign hashtag to use on Twitter and Facebook. Ensure that the hashtag is short and doesn't exceed 140 characters.
 - Also find other hashtags related to your legislative topic and include in your tweets. You can find the hashtags by typing the topic in a Twitter search and viewing other related tweets to see which hashtags appear most commonly in the online conversation.
 - Develop four to five different short messages to tweet people directly. Get to the point and include a link to an article or blog post with more information.
 - If you do not receive a response, wait for a week and tweet the person again.
- Always be polite and kind. Remember that nothing is ever deleted on the Internet
- Reporters and others in the media
 - Use Twitter for reaching reporters and other media.
 - List the people you would like to contact. It is best to focus on local reporters and bloggers.
 - Search online for each person's Twitter handle.
 - Develop four to five different short messages to tweet people directly. Get to the point and include a link to an article or blog post with more information.
 - If you are very interested in reaching a specific person, share two to three articles they have written on your Twitter account. Remember to give them credit and include their Twitter handle. This tactic will make them aware of your campaign and might motivate them to share your message.

- Public
 - Use a Facebook page or LinkedIn company page to reach the general public.
 - Develop posts that are two to three sentences and quickly get to the point. Include a brief description of the legislative topic and a call to action.
 - Do not bombard people with posts; share a campaign-related message once or twice a week.
- Coalition partners and allies
 - Use Twitter for reaching coalition partners and allies. Follow the recommended steps for reaching decision makers and speakers.
 - List the communications contact at the coalition partners and allies companies you would like to reach. Find each person's contact information on their website.
 - Send a short email to each person and request that they share a message about your campaign on their Facebook page.
 - Modify the messages you created for your own Facebook page, and share with the contacts.

ALLIES AND COALITIONS

There is strength in numbers

Your key to effective advocacy is identifying other groups and individuals who support your cause, are working for similar outcomes, and who may be beneficiaries of the desired goal. This strategy increases your political power, demonstrates your issue's broad-based appeal, and provides "third-party validators" who legitimize your effort.

Identify your potential allies

Your potential allies can be any number of stakeholders and interests, both in government and in the private sector.

- Any legislator or agency official already in favor of your position
- Actual or potential beneficiaries of the policy for which you are advocating
- Recognized experts in the field such as academics and former legislators who've dealt with the issue
- Supportive community and business leaders and other citizens who understand the issue, including community leaders and local elected officials, clergy, heads of civic organizations, businesspeople and volunteers with time and inclination to work on the campaign
- Credible celebrities who are sympathetic to the issue
- Members of the media, such as reporters, columnists and bloggers, who share your views
- Associations and advocacy interest groups already engaged in legislative advocacy, from chambers of commerce and labor unions to environmental groups and from education advocates to small business associations

TIP: Don't write off people with whom you may disagree on other issues. If they're in favor of this issue and support your position, they're allies.

Find common ground

The benefit of working with other groups is that each member brings something unique to the table, adding value and filling gaps that other groups may have. For example, if your organization has strong relationships with Republicans on a particular target committee, but not with Democrats, identifying a partner group that works well with Democrats ensures better coverage.

Working in coalition

Sometimes these relationships can be formalized into larger groups or a coalition. In this instance it can be useful to identify what each coalition partner is able to contribute to the effort.

These are some of the key ingredients of a successful coalition, and items to consider when looking for allies to join your effort.

- General Resources
 - Number of members/supporters
 - Size of staff
 - Size of PAC (if they have one)
 - Size of social media network
- Gap fillers
 - Are their targets on your legislative list with which you do not have strong connections but a potential ally does?
 - Key media outlets/people with which each coalition partner works
 - Research, white papers and statistics that bolster the case
 - Anecdotes that support the effort

TIP: Successfully bringing in stakeholders with ideologically divergent points of view (such as business and labor) is an effective way to demonstrate to policymakers the political potency of your issue.

Set expectations

It is important that the coalition establish and understand the rules of the road in terms of resources, decision-making and responsibilities. It might not be necessary for you to write these down (and creating coalition “bylaws” can be an enormous time and resource waster), but having clear expectations at the outset will help avoid future problems.

Key Questions to Ask

- Goals
 - What is the main outcome of the coalition? Once the goal is reached (say, getting a bill passed), will the coalition sunset?
- Name
 - Does your coalition have a name? If so, who decides on the name? For a short-term effort, like passing a bill, coming up with a catchy name could be a real time-waster. But if you expect the coalition to exist for a longer time, a name for the group helps provide branding and a message that reinforces the group’s goals.
 - If the coalition doesn’t have a name, under whose name do communications go out? Some coalitions list every coalition member on their letterhead; others just the core members.

- Coordination
 - Once a coalition is formed, it is vital to identify a single coordinating individual or group at the core of your advocacy effort. This facilitates good communication and decision making. More importantly, it places a leader at the center who knows what's going on and how to act or react quickly, decisively and effectively. The coordinating individual or group should, of course, involve all participants as much as possible. However, there may be times when the whole advocacy group will need to trust the coordinator to make a decision and mobilize support.
 - The coordinator should serve as the focal point for the campaign, orchestrating communication, directing action and whatever else needs to be done. This person might also be responsible for acting as the coalition's spokesperson, writing and distributing press releases, drafting public statements or position papers, contacting sources of information, and tracking and sharing the latest information about legislative developments.
- Decision Making
 - Who makes the key operational decisions for the coalition, especially when there are decisions that need to be made quickly, such as whether to support a compromise in a piece of legislation?
 - Do decisions by the coalition need to be unanimous among all coalition members, or does a small group (or even one entity) make the decisions?
- Finances
 - Is your coalition going to be dues based? If so, how much? This is almost always unnecessary for shorter-term efforts, like a coalition designed to pass a bill in a legislative session. But if the effort will take several years, it may be useful to identify a pot of money from which the coalition can draw.
 - If the coalition is going to spend money on certain activities (for example, a newspaper ad or a report), are all coalition members expected to contribute?
- Assignments and Accountability
 - How does the group make assignments and ensure that those duties are carried out? For example, if a coalition member promises to contact five specific members of Congress, what is the method for ensuring that they do and for having a back-up plan if they can't?

- Communications

It's vital that you and your allies be able to reach one another quickly and mobilize for immediate action. At times you will have a day or less to act, whether it's putting together an urgent strategy meeting, making calls to legislators, or organizing a public event on short notice. You have to make every minute count. The best way to ensure effective action is through an effective communication system. Effective systems vary with circumstances, but they have a few features in common:

- A single individual, or at most a small coordinating group, is responsible for coordinating communication. A communication system needs someone at its hub to manage it. The logical person for this is usually a staff person, but that can vary from situation to situation. If it isn't possible for one person to play this role, then it should be shared among as few people as possible to minimize errors and missed opportunities.
- Coalition members have to identify the best ways to communicate with one another before the moment of urgency and discuss how they will receive urgent messages. Remember that in the case of an organization, there may be different staff or members having different roles. For example, there might be one point of contact for political activity, another for communications and media, and yet another who coordinates member activities. Make sure each partner in the coalition clearly identifies who the right point of contact will be depending on the subject matter.
- The coalition should decide on a schedule for regular interaction and updates, such as a weekly call at a set time (e.g., every Monday at 3pm) when the issue is hot, or less frequently when it isn't.
- Online document-sharing platforms, like Dropbox or Google Docs, give everyone in the coalition access to key materials. They also make it easier to edit coalition documents. If the coalition plans to send out letters or press releases with the names and logos of a number of organizations, a document sharing site can be used to store electronic copies of logos and key signatures.

TIP: As you collect allies or enter into coordinated campaigns or coalitions, ensure that everyone agrees on the basics of what you're advocating for and against. It is also a good idea to have written expectations for public comment, the use of organizations names and procedures for decision making.

ELECTIONS AND PACS

We all know that elections are important; it's how the public participates in the democratic process and holds elected officials accountable. It's common sense that elections impact the policy work that comes once the votes are counted. A change in party control of a governor's mansion or legislature will have enormous impacts on the kinds of policy proposals that will advance.

But elections are important to advocacy campaigns in another very important way: they help you build relationships with current and future policymakers, while energizing and activating your supporters.

Elections provide a great opportunity for organizations to build relationships with legislators and candidates, involve constituents in the political process and to build power for the organization.

There are two main avenues for building relationships and power: voters and money.

Voters

Involvement in the democratic process takes many forms. At the most basic is voting. But it doesn't stop there. Voters can play a larger role in the electoral process by volunteering for campaigns, donating money, and educating candidates on the issues. Each step of engagement brings a higher level of effectiveness and influence.

Voter registration

Ensuring that your members are registered to vote is critical. If you are not registered to vote, you cannot hold elected officials accountable. Members also need to know who their elected officials are, how to contact them, and where and when they can vote.

Every state organizes voter registration through their secretary of state's office. Providing your members with links to the website of your secretary of state ensures they are able to register themselves.

TIP: The AIA's Vocus grassroots system has a function that connects AIA members to their secretary of state.

Elections don't just take place on the first Tuesday in November. Between primary elections, municipal elections, school board votes and more, there is usually more than one opportunity for voters to cast their ballots in any given year. Ensure that your members have access to crucial information regarding elections.

It is equally vital that voters know where to vote, as states often move voting locations from year to year. Again, your state's secretary of state website will have information about voting locations.

Educate voters

Voters all have different reasons for how they vote including party loyalty, passion for issues, the qualities and records of candidates, and what their friends, family and other influencers believe. For your organization, voting provides an opportunity to highlight your issues, both to your members and to the public at large.

Many non-profit organizations provide voter guides on where the candidates for various offices stand. Some are relatively objective, others lean to one side of the political spectrum and some focus on specific issues.

If your organization has specific issues for which it advocates, informing your members about where candidates for office stand helps them become more educated voters at the voting booth. Developing a voter guide both signals to candidates that you are watching how they vote and helps reinforce to your members that the political process impacts the issues they care about.

Candidate forums and questionnaires

Preparing a voter guide can be more than a research effort; your organization can also use the process to engage with the candidates.

Candidate forums – Many AIA chapters have organized candidate forums and debates, usually for local elections such as mayoral races. Organizing a candidate forum is a very effective, albeit resource intensive, tool for building member engagement and fostering relationships with future elected officials.

Candidate questionnaires – Many organizations develop candidate questionnaires, asking them for their views on certain issues. Organizations then publish the responses so their members—and the public—can see where the candidates stand.

When doing a questionnaire, it's important to be clear to the campaigns about how you plan to use it. Are you planning to make endorsements based on the results, or simply share the results without commentary? Are you making them available only to your members or to the public?

It's also important to choose questions that elicit useful responses. Asking candidates open-ended questions like, "Do you support green buildings?" will usually result in boilerplate platitudes that fail to illuminate candidates' positions. More specific questions on legislation or policies have two benefits: they will result in clearer answers, and they will help introduce your legislative agenda to candidates before the election.

Encourage direct voter involvement

Encouraging members to register to vote and providing them with candidate information connects your members to the electoral process and lays the groundwork for successful advocacy later on. But one of the best ways to impact your legislative advocacy is to build direct relationships with potential elected officials by encouraging your members to volunteer for campaigns.

Most campaigns at the local and even state level are fairly small affairs: at most, a paid staffer and a few consultants, and a small army of volunteers normally drawn from the candidate's circle of friends, family and community. Volunteering on a campaign helps you build a connection with a potential lawmaker at a time when relatively few other people even know about that person.

Remember that federal and many state laws carefully govern the extent to which organizations and individuals provide financial or in-kind support to candidates. If you, for example, organize a number of members to participate in a phone bank for a candidate at your organization's offices, the campaign may have to report the costs of phone calls and office space in their campaign disclosure reports. Before you engage in any type of election-related activity, be sure you are following all relevant local, state and federal laws, and have consulted with your attorney.

Raising money: getting the most out of state PACs

Money is a fact of life when it comes to politics. Campaigns are costly endeavors that require hiring staff, producing and mailing campaign literature, airing commercials, renting office space and a host of other infrastructure costs. That is why candidates for elected office spend a good deal of time fundraising for their campaigns.

Whether you like the current campaign finance system or think it needs an overhaul, donating to campaigns is an effective way to amplify the other elements of your advocacy strategy. You can't trade campaign money for votes on a particular issue. However, donating to campaigns helps you build relationships with the people who will be making policy decisions that impact you and your profession.

A state political action committee (PAC) can amplify your voice, demonstrate the political power of your profession and elevate your issues.

Benefits of having a State PAC:

- Provides an additional tool to support your legislative champions. Your legislative champions are valuable to you and the AIA; supporting them financially through PAC contributions helps keep them in office.
- Gives your members a way to participate in the political process. People who contribute to a PAC have made a political decision to get engaged on the issues that matter the most to them. An active, involved membership can be a key part of your success.
- Amplifies your voice. Depending on the state, individuals and organizations are usually limited on how much they can contribute to a political candidate. A state PAC represents the entire membership.
- Raises the profile of the AIA. Legislators stand up and notice when you have a PAC.

Successful PACs require two elements: a strong fundraising plan to fill its coffers and a well thought-out disbursement plan to ensure you are using your funds effectively.

Whole books have been written about effective fundraising techniques. We won't go into the best tips for asking someone for a donation, but instead will focus on the larger strategies to ensure your PAC is positioned to raise a lot of money.

TIP: Each state has specific laws that cover PACs in their state, typically addressing who can donate, fundraising and giving limits, and public disclosure requirements, among others. It is important to consult with a knowledgeable attorney on all PAC activities.

Know the competition

How big is a successful PAC? That amount may vary, depending on your state's campaign finance laws and the general political environment. Understanding how your "competitors" fare is the first step to developing a realistic plan of what you should raise.

- Who are the main organizations that lobby on your issues (e.g., real estate, design and construction, environmental groups, etc.)?
- Most states have publicly accessible databases that show how much these groups raise. Remember that organizations with more members are more likely to raise more money.

Develop a PAC fundraising plan

Target certain member groups.

- Provide training on making the ask.
- Offer incentive programs.

Maximize your PAC contributions for more donations to the PAC

The easiest way to demonstrate the importance of giving to the state PAC is to show the direct connection between political giving and access. Have active AIA members who have not given to your PAC deliver a check to an elected official, provide them with talking points and ask them to represent the organization. This is now a person who has seen first hand the importance of political giving, you should ask them to support the PAC.

Disbursements

You can raise all the money in the world for your PAC, but unless you use those funds effectively by donating to candidates, it will not help you advance your legislative priorities. That, in turn, will hurt your ability to go back to members the following year to ask for donations.

Develop a targeting plan

The best way to ensure your funds are used the right way is to develop a targeting plan. Much like the targeting plan you developed for your legislative strategy, a PAC target plan helps you identify where to donate your PAC dollars. There is one major difference: while the legislative targeting is intended to build support for a particular policy proposal, PAC targeting is about building longer-term relationships, and is not tied to any one proposal or bill.

In general, there are four areas where you want to focus your efforts.

1. Your existing champions (and potential future champions): Who are the legislators who will go to bat for you even if nobody else will? Who is always reaching out to ensure your voice is heard? Target your giving to those who are your champions and those whom you want to cultivate. Use your PAC to reward people who fight for your cause and support your issues.
2. Leadership. The leaders of the legislature are the elected officials who decide which bills will go the floor and which will die in committee. Although they might not be engaged with every detail of your legislative agenda, making sure they know who you are is critical to getting your views heard in the legislature.
3. Members of key committees. If licensure is a perennial issue for you, then support legislators who serve on the committee overseeing that issue. Even if nothing is happening on the issue right now, supporting the campaigns of members on your key committees is a good way to build relationships with the policymakers who, sooner or later, will vote on your issues.
4. Partisan breakdown. The AIA is a bipartisan organization. This does not mean your disbursements need to be an exact 50–50 split. In fact, if one party is dominant in your state, it may make sense that more of your champions are members of that party. As a general rule, your ratio between Democrats and Republicans should not be greater than 3:2, with no more than 60 percent of your donations going to one party

TIP: Track which elected officials are planning to retire at the next election or run for a different office. You might not want to devote limited PAC donations to someone who will not be in the legislature much longer.

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

For years, surveys of AIA members have shown that legislative advocacy is considered one of the most important value propositions for members and one of the key reasons they renew.

An effective, holistic legislative and political advocacy strategy will both increase your odds of success in the policy realm and help build member engagement and enthusiasm within your organization.

Building a Culture of Advocacy

A culture of advocacy is one in which the organization applies an “advocacy lens” to all that it does. It doesn’t mean that advocacy is the only thing the AIA does; it means that the organization looks for and identifies opportunities to engage its members in advocacy through all its channels.

A culture of advocacy can be described as follows:

- Is inclusive. All members should be able to find issues and activities that match their passion.
- Is action-oriented. Advocacy means taking action. In a culture of advocacy, members are not just informed of the issues, but invited and encouraged to do something.
- Adds value. In a culture of advocacy, your efforts to enact policy can help to build the strength of your overall organization, by providing clear member value, giving members a chance to engage their passions, and by bringing new allies, supporters and awareness to the work your organization does.
- Saves time and money. More volunteers means more gets done. The more members involved in lobbying legislators, donating to PACs and organizing community activities, the more your organization can achieve and build relationships with policymakers.

On the following pages are some ways you can use your advocacy program to build the strength of your organization.

Member engagement

Let's face it, politics is not for everyone. Asking members to write their representatives and give to the PAC when they don't find politics engaging can be a tall order. That's why it's important to remember why we engage in advocacy. We don't do it for the sake of doing it, but to advance policies and ideas that shape a better environment for architects and a better world.

Every architect has passion, whether it's for good design, sustainability, historic preservation, accessibility, community development or a host of other issues. Each of these passion areas has resonance in the policy world.

If you are passionate about...	You will care about...
Sustainability	State adoption of energy codes
Historic Preservation	Maintaining historic tax credits
Disaster Relief	Passing Good Samaritan laws
Small firm prosperity	Small business loans and programs

Engagement Pyramid

By identifying where members' passions lie, you can mobilize members who otherwise are not engaged in advocacy and continue to get them more engaged.

Typically, members potentially interested in advocacy fall into one of five categories defined by their level of engagement:



As the levels of engagement deepen, the number of members in each engagement category will get smaller. Those in the top level (advocacy leaders) are those who are likely to be on advocacy committees.

Identifying areas of passion and crafting messages to activate members helps move them from one level to another. For example, members who are passionate about sustainability—but do not see the importance of advocacy—are more likely to respond to messages that tie their passion for sustainability to your advocacy agenda.



Getting members engaged in advocacy by tapping into their passions enables you to speak their language, on their terms, and demonstrate why advocacy matters to them.

There are several ways to get members engaged in advocacy:

Step 1: Make advocacy messaging part of your general messaging

By making sure that you report on your organization's advocacy initiatives on a regular basis, you help inform members of the key issues and show that they have a role in shaping the outcomes. Virtually any member communications can include advocacy stories and information:

- Periodic newsletters
- Messages from the president
- Blog/discussion posts
- Websites
- Social media engagement
- Updates during chapter meetings and events
- Leave-behind cards at chapter offices and events

Tailor messages to stakeholder groups

All architects are passionate, but their passions vary based on the work they do, firm size, and career stage. By identifying key stakeholder groups inside the organization and thinking about what issues will drive their passions, you can target messages to the right people.

Group	Issues of Interest
Emerging Professional Committees	Licensure, Student Debt
Sustainability Groups (like COTE)	Energy Efficiency, Green Codes
Education Facility Architects	School Construction
Architects Who Design for State and Local Governments	Procurement
Disaster Assistance Committees	Good Sam, Resilient Building Codes
Small Firm Committees	Small Firm Lending, Taxes
Building Codes Committees	Code Adoption

Make Advocacy a Key Part of Your Organizational Strategy and Operational Plan

Create Opportunities for members to get involved

Once you have identified members interested (or potentially interested) in advocacy, you can begin to create opportunities to engage. Practice shows that when someone has the chance to get involved in one advocacy activity, they are more likely to get more involved in others, especially if they see that their efforts made a difference.

There is an almost limitless number of events and activities to get members involved. Here are a few:

1. Help shape policy. Giving members a chance to weigh in on an organization's policy agenda not only creates stronger buy-in for that agenda; it also gives members an impetus to get involved in advancing it.
 - a. Call for Issues. A "Call for Issues" is a survey tool that organizations can send to their members, asking them to rate the top issues they believe their organization should prioritize in an upcoming legislative session. It is important to set expectations that the survey results are one of a number of factors an organization must consider (such as political viability) when developing its agenda.
 - b. Poll questions. Placing a short poll question on the website or in a newsletter is a fairly easy way to get members engaged in some of the policy issues with which the organization deals. Poll questions should be simple (Yes/No, or multiple choice). Be prepared: the results might surprise you!
 - c. Policy summits. If there are complex issues that members have identified as their top issues, organize a policy summit or other event at which outside experts or policymakers can discuss and debate policy solutions. Events like these place the organization in a leadership role and help build consensus around a possible solution.

2. Meet with policymakers. Nothing gets a prospective advocate excited about advocacy work than having a chance to meet lawmakers or other government officials. While many AIA components organize Capitol Hill lobby days, there are numerous ways to create opportunities for members to meet policymakers in a range of environments. Such events not only help show members that engaging with their democratic leaders is easy; they also help build relationships with those who hold the levers of power on your issues.
 - a. Meet-and-greets at a component office (or an architecture firm). At these events, policy issues do not have to be front-and-center. Instead, use them as a chance to get to know a policymaker (and for them to get to know you). Even if there is no “ask,” spending time with policymakers helps build trust and understanding that will come in handy later on.
 - b. Candidate forums and debates. During an election season, hosting a forum or debate gives members the chance to ask candidates questions about AIA-related issues and also demonstrates the organization’s relevance in the political process.
 - c. PAC check delivery. Giving members the chance to deliver a PAC check to a lawmaker is a great way to demonstrate the power of a PAC and build relationships between lawmakers and their constituents.

TIP: If you schedule a PAC check delivery, consider inviting along a member or members who have not given to the PAC. The experience is a terrific way to encourage them to start giving by showing them the power of political donations.

3. Provide training. Developing continuing education sessions (or borrowing curricula from AIA National or other sources) on how to lobby or ways to get involved in a political campaign is an effective tool for engaging members, while they are earning those coveted continuing education learning units. A training session does not have to be elaborate: the trainers can be members who are experienced in advocacy, a contract lobbyist, even a lawmakers or legislative staff person.

Celebrate success

Getting members to embrace advocacy requires that they highlight and showcase the times when their advocacy produced results, whether it’s getting a good bill passed, blocking a bad bill, or getting a mayor or governor to include architects on a commission or committee. If specific members helped to make a victory possible (such as members who answered an action alert on a specific bill), make sure to report back to them on their success and thank them.

Targeting Step 2: Prioritize your targets (high, medium, low)

This is an optional step – use the last column of the chart to prioritize your targets. This is useful if you have a large number of targets that fall in the “somewhat” or neutral categories.

Targeting Step 3: Capture what you know about your top priority targets

Do this for all you higher priority targets. Capturing this information will help build a picture of your targets and help you determine the best approach for reaching out to them.

Targets Name _____

Position _____

Questions

- What are your target's policy priorities?
- Which issues do they care about?
- Which issues are they indifferent to?
- What do they want their legacy to be?
- Have they made public statements about your issue?
- What is your target's past experience with your issue?
- What is the targets background with your organization?
- What is your targets previous (or current, if a state legislator) profession?
- Is your target considering running for higher office in the future?
- Where is your target's home community (more relevant for statewide office-holders)?



WORKSHEET 2

POWER MAPPING

POWER MAPPING PRIORITY TARGETS

Target name _____

What is the desired outcome for my target?

- 1.
- 2.

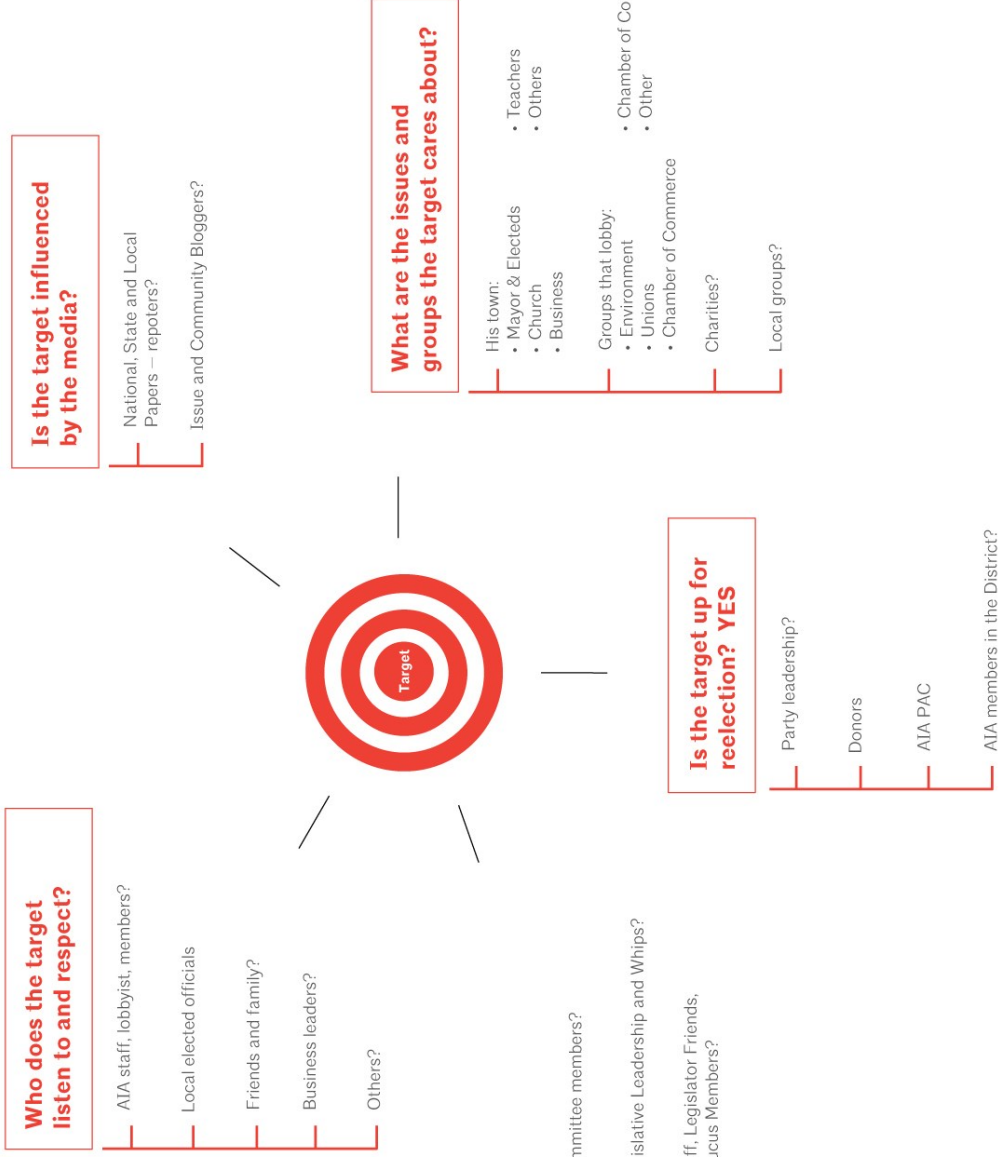
Does the target care about my issue? If yes, how deeply do they care? What have they done to demonstrate they care about the issue?

What is my strategy to convince the target to take the desired action?

Step 1: Identify spheres of influence:

- What do you know about the target?
- Work (e.g., Allies in legislature, etc.):
- Politics (are they running for office, do they have a challenge, are they in leadership or influential in the party):
- Affiliations (groups they belong to, positions held):
- Community (volunteer, philanthropic work):
- Neighborhood (where are they from and what are they involved in):

POWER MAPPING PRIORITY TARGETS



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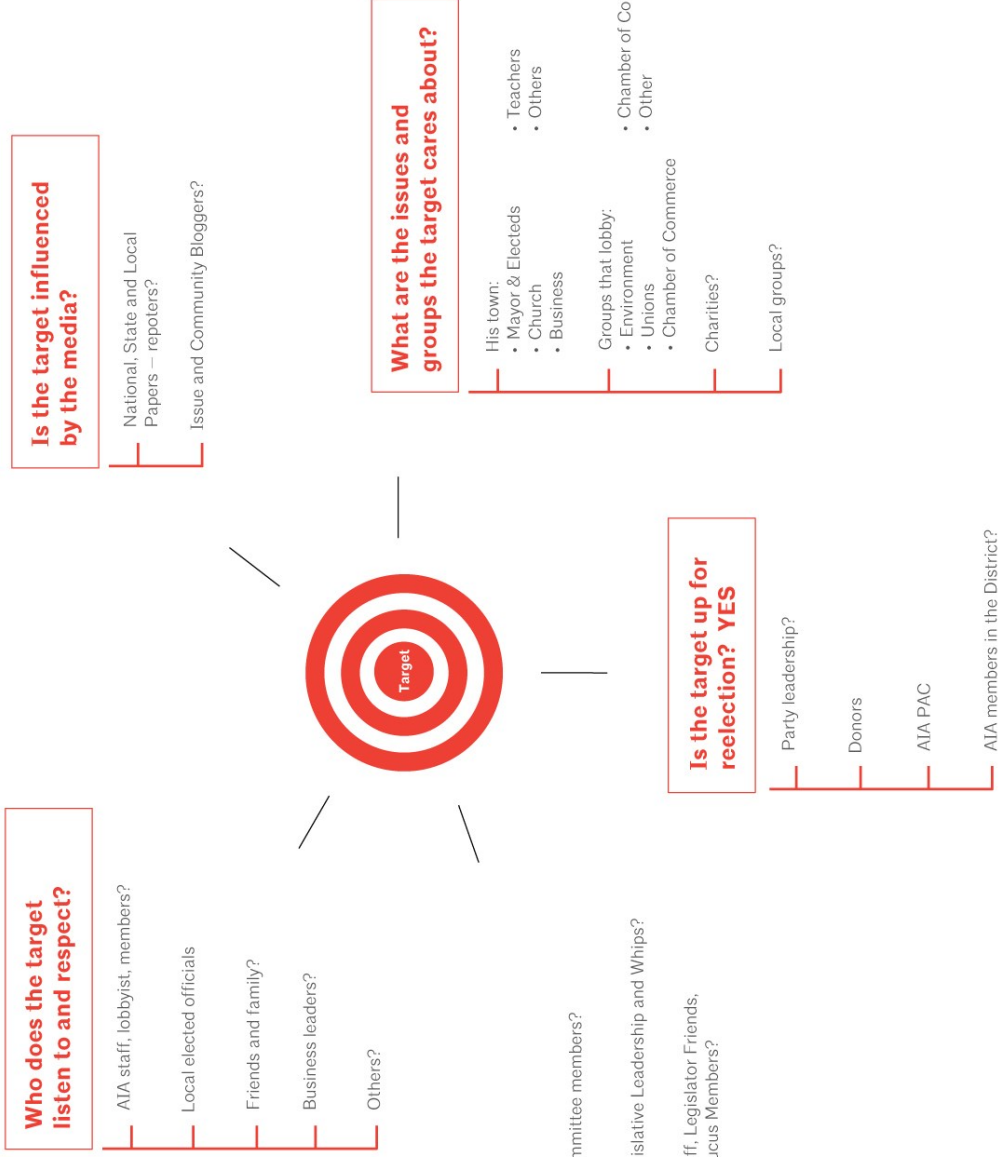
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POWER MAPPING PRIORITY TARGETS





WORKSHEET 3

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

CREATING A MESSAGE

Answer the following

What's the point? Identify the heart of the issue you're advocating for.

Why does it matter? Why should people care about the problem and solution you've proposed? Focus on the outcomes that impact people's lives and make sure you are relating to your target audience.

What are you offering? What is the practical, real-world impact of the solutions you're proposing? Remember: the ultimate goal is not to pass a bill; it's to improve the world.

What do you want your audience to do? Be specific, and clear.

Combine 1 through 4 into a short (2 to 3 sentences) message.

Questions:

- Is your message inspiring?
- Is your message relevant?
- If your audience is non-architects, are you demonstrating how the problem will impact the community?
- Is your solution clear, accessible and easy to grasp?
- Is it logical?
- Can it be repeated easily?

Are there specific audiences that will require you to modify/adapt your message? If yes, specify the changes or adaptations.