



Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian's 13 Tips for Successful Advocacy

1. Develop a relationship before you arrive (a year, an hour, a 15-minute phone call).
2. Understand what motivates your audience (i.e., the Member or his/her staff); and tell them why they care.
3. Understand what is possible and what is not.
4. Find a floor manager.
5. Joe Jackson Principle. Tell them what you want.
6. Bring them solutions, not problems (interest group agreement).
7. Describe the elements of a solution, rather than insist on your solution.
8. Do not chastise, insult or threaten the Member or his/her staff.
9. Understand that sometimes less is more.
10. Layer your campaign.
11. Woody Allen Corollary (persistence pays off).
12. Make it easy to say yes.
13. The value of a "thank you."

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Developing a Plan

1. What's your problem? Start with our own concerns and ideas about solutions and then develop a consensus definition.
2. Look at things from more than one angle. What differing perspectives exist about your problem and are some of them valid? Are there ways that your solution can also address those concerns?
3. Understand the process. Find someone with experience to mentor you about the process.
4. Figure out who has the wrench. Who is involved in making the policy or decision? What are the roles of the staff and your representatives?
5. Get Real. Understand what is possible and what is not.
6. Plan a path to success and have determination to get there.

The Campaign

1. Develop relationships with the decision makers before you arrive. If you don't know them, find an ally who does.
2. Understand your audience. What motivates them? Tell them why they should care about your issue. What messages will resonate best with different decision makers.
3. Find an advocate (or two) who will be an effective floor manager.
4. Be Realistic. Explain what realistic solution you want, not just what is the problem. Describe the elements of a solution, rather a precise solution. Make it easy to say yes.
5. Understand the role of compromise and that it may be an important element of success.
6. Don't chastise, insult or threaten the official or his/her staff. Doing so may drive them to defending their staff or themselves.

We won! What now?

1. Thank people for listening to you and for their help.
2. Be willing to help support implementation.