



How to Build Working Relationships with the New Provincial Government

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Negotiation With Government

“During the election the parties have to listen to us, so let’s tell them what we demand they do. Right?”

- NO! ... Election period worst time to get demands heard.
- Campaigns / platforms are designed in advance.
- Be sensitive to the candidates’ main need – getting elected.
- Continuous polling dictates the issues that get priority.
- Big, public issues, often led by media coverage, is where parties can demonstrate differences.

What To Do During the Election?

- Don't become political.
- Opportunity to build relationships.
- Hedge your bets - spend equal time.
- Assisting with the candidates will allow you to understand their values and decision making skills.
- Your approach will be remembered.
- "In the trenches" the values expressed in platforms, brochures, etc can be verified.
- Election volunteers often end up as political advisors in the new government.

After the Election

- Don't wait.
- Immediately identify and meet with new political staff.
- New Minister's may not be knowledgeable about the issues – spend time educating the political offices.
- Deputies and ADMs will be briefing the new political offices and Ministers.
- “Brief the briefers” - arrange meetings with senior bureaucrats to influence the priorities.

Hierarchy of Meetings to Arrange

- Chief of Staff / Executive Assistant to the Minister.
- Senior political policy advisor to the Minister.
- Deputy Minister.
- Assistant Deputy Minister.
- Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister.
- Senior policy advisor to the Premier.

Best Practices: Securing the Meeting

- Call and Ask:
 - Ask for the MPP's scheduler
 - Make the scheduler feel important - they are the gatekeepers
 - Polite and persistent
 - Never make demands
 - Persistence demonstrates that your need to meet is real
 - Calling back every few days is acceptable
- Use the one page briefing note:
 - Helps to clarify who you are
 - Gives all the necessary background and facts
 - Ensures consistent message is delivered
- Be flexible on the time and location
 - If possible over lunch
 - Boardroom meetings are usually too formal
- Letters only to formalize the request

Best Practices: Conducting the Meeting

- Be on time - Early sometimes means more time
- Focus on building a relationship:
 - The briefing note already contains the facts, don't repeat it
 - Spend time "making friends"
 - Be friendly
 - Engage them to talk about their past / experience / family / kids hockey / etc
 - Try to keep the atmosphere intimate - bring two to three people maximum
- Use the 80 / 20 rule
 - Ask questions, advice, and suggestions - engage them to talk
- Focus on what is being said
 - Do not overwhelm them with facts
 - Ask for advice on the issues
 - Don't be trapped into questions on regional difference - remind them that all the agencies have the same need
- Take notes, if necessary
 - Advice, suggestions, comments are essential for debrief

After the Meeting: Follow Up

- Don't Wait Around for an Answer
- Do Follow up afterwards
 - Make them feel important
 - Thank them - no one else does
 - Make sure they have briefed their Minister
 - Build an ongoing relationship - filter information to and from
 - Meet regularly with key staff (bi-monthly, quarterly, semi-annually)

Questions / Comments?



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