

SIMPLE RULES FOR INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY MAKERS : 9 Ws

WHAT

Know what you're talking about – in detail

- have all the relevant facts to hand or be able to get them immediately
- have some idea (does not need to be exact) about what it's going to cost (real \$)
- don't assume they know everything in advance – help educate but don't patronise
- don't bullshit – politicians are the experts at detecting it !

WHY

Make it clear exactly why you're there

- be precise about what you want
- articulate your preferred outcome clearly
- be ready to offer solutions not just outline problems

WHO

Know who it is that you're talking to

- know what makes them “tick” personally
- know what interests they represent
- know what's on their agenda

WHO ELSE

Be in the business of building Coalitions and Networks

- let people know that you're not the only ones interested in this issue if that is the case
- remember that you also need a strategy to deal with the media
 - media will be interested if the story is interesting
 - media will be more interested if you do most of the work
 - local media is important to local politicians
 - make use of the new media – internet etc.

WHERE

You need to find the right “entry points” into the system

- is this a matter that can be fixed at a relatively low level – less effort
- does it need to go to a higher level
 - how do you get entry there
 - do you have the resources available to meet these higher demands

WEIGHT

What sort of weight does your interlocutor carry

- are they an “Indian” or a “Chief”
- can they actually make something happen
- equally : can they prevent things from happening – can they be “neutralised”?

WHEN

Be clear about the timetable from here on

- have a realistic appreciation about when anything can occur
- is there a date/time by which something must occur

WINNERS

The aim is to maximise the number of winners in this undertaking

- for any winner there is almost certainly going to be losers
 - money for your project is money not available for theirs
 - some “progress” (eg abortion law reform; decriminalisation of homosexuality; needle exchanges; euthanasia) may challenge other people’s moral or ethical position

WHEELS

Remember that you need a long term commitment and long term perspective
There is no substitute for perseverance

- the wheel always turns
 - governments change
 - new people come along – more receptive and supportive
 - new evidence emerges to strengthen cases
 - the environment changes and becomes more positive
- don’t try to reinvent the wheels – learns from others or past experiences