

# Grassroots: Telling Your Advocacy Story

Rikki Amos

Director

U.S. Public Affairs Practice

Public Affairs Council

# If There's Only One Rule

## 5 Pillars of Grassroots

- Recruitment
- Education
- Activation
- Communication
- Tracking

The most important best practice?

# #1- Set Baselines, Develop Goals and Define Success

## What is Grassroots to Your Organization?

- What are your key policy priorities?
- Will grassroots work?
- What's the bottom line impact to the business?
- Where are your stakeholders on these issues?
- What's your reputation on this topic?

***Goal: Begin with the end in mind***

## #2 – Build the Infrastructure

- Staffing and responsibilities
- Role of other departments
- Data management plan
  - Software
  - Consultants

***Goal: Build it so they can come***

## #3 - Build a Communications Strategy

- Website
- Newsletters, emails, gathering places
- Role of social media
- What do you want them to know? Do?
- It's a visual world and brand matters
- Are you authentic?

***Goal: Be where they are not where you want them to be.***

## #4 – Recruit Your Advocates

- The power of the constituent
- Be intentional: this is not a shot in the dark
- Choose your approach: Broadbased, Key Contacts/Grasstops/Ambassadors, 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties
- Consider this: Quantity vs. Quality
- If the mountain won't come to you, go to the mountain
- Senior executive engagement

***Goal: Find the right advocates***

# #5 – Educate and Empower

## Internal

- People or puppets?
- How: events, web, training programs

## External

- How are you sharing your expertise?
- Site visits, fly-ins, leave behinds

## Channels

- Multi-channel, multi-dimensional, think visually

***Goal: Build Trust***

# #6 – Develop an Activation Strategy

#1 reason for failure?

What do you do about it?

- Reverse engineer your strategy
- Forums: There's more to it than an email
- Variation
- How you say it is as important as what you say

***Goal: Advancing your issues***



## #7 – Adapt

Refine your key messages and messengers

- Empower your advocates to tell their (your) story
- Stories vs. Data
- Get local
- Get personal

***Goal: Grassroots is about people.  
Tell stories to reach the heart then  
use data to reach the head.***

# #8 - Integrate with Other Functions

## Government Relations and PAC

- A 360 degree political strategy

## Community Relations and CSR

- We're more than a position on a policy
- Being a community leader in every sense of the word

## PR and Communications

- If a tree falls in the forest...

***Goal: Everyone sings the same tune***

# #9 – Build Your Reputation

Is what you do who you are?

- Transparency in Grassroots: What does it look like?
- Why does it make a difference?
- Becoming a trusted resource – internally and externally
- Ask yourself: do your grassroots activities reinforce the reputation you want elected officials, employees and members to have?

***Goal: Build credibility***

# #10 – Measure Outcomes

## Demonstrate the ROI

- Specific measures
- Specific tools
- A word about measuring outputs vs. outcomes

***Goal: Always be improving***

# Questions?

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- **Margaret Mead**

**Rikki D. Amos**

Director, U.S. Public Affairs Practice  
Public Affairs Council  
202-787-5950

[ramos@pac.org](mailto:ramos@pac.org) | [www.pac.org](http://www.pac.org) | @PACouncil