

So you're going to Lobby Day.....

Here are a few do's and don'ts that will ensure you get the biggest bang for your buck when you have face time with a senator.

- **Make an appointment**

Call the senator you plan on seeing well in advance of Lobby day and let them know that you are a constituent from their area and that you would like to make an appointment to meet. Most often these meetings are arranged by their Legislative Aid. There may be a few folks from your area wanting to meet with them on lobby day so try and combine it into one meeting with everyone so you respect the senator's time.

- **Do your homework.**

Find out a little about them before you go. Something that you can make small talk about before you get into the meat of why you are there. Maybe the town they are from just had an event or the sport team from the community college won a title. It helps to develop conversation and allows them to get comfortable with you.

- **Prepare what you are going to say**

I don't mean "Q" cards or a script you pull out. Just have a mental plan and some prepared thoughts that you would like to address.

- **Bring a bag of names to drop**

It always helps to add some support from back home to leverage a point of view. An example would be that you belong to a vets or community organization and they support your point of view. Or you were talking to Mr. Money who owns the bank and he supports your points.

- **Get them out of the Capital**

Not really but say things that bring them home and out of their comfort area. Use little reminders that they are from South Omaha or Beaver Crossing.

- **Be yourself**

You have had a lot more practice being yourself than pretending to be someone else for the next five minutes. You will be a lot more believable and your thoughts more sincere if you are what you are.

- **Focus**

If you get 30 minutes of face time you are doing really well. An average meeting ranges around 15 minutes and 5 minutes on either side are hellos and good byes. That leaves 10 minutes to illustrate a point, get their comments and share yours.

- **No "BULL"**

If you don't know you don't know. The quickest way to tune them out is to drop a line of BS on them. If they have you in a corner simply say, "we have a guy in our organization that has that answer, would you mind if I share that question with him and we can both get back with you?"

- **Listen**

What are they saying really, allow them time to say it and write it down? What are the objections specifically? If you spend the whole time talking then you will leave with no idea as to what it will take to change their mind.

- **What will it take to change their mind**

This is important if not the most important. If they object, ask them what you can do, find out, or have happen, to get them to support what you're saying and write it down. Get them to be specific. If they say, "I really just don't think I can support this." You then say, "Specifically what is it that makes you not supportive and what can I do to change that."

- **Be respectful**

No matter what you think of them they have earned the right to be there and the majority of the folks from your area agree. If you think for a minute that you are about to belch up some fire, wrap the thing up while your smile muscles still work and get the heck out.

- **The close**

If they support us then thank them for the support and ask them if there is anything you can assist them with. Is there an issue they need talked up at home that they are working on? Show them that you support them as well.

If they don't support you and you asked what it would take to change that, ask them if you do produce what they asked for if you can then count on their support. Get a commitment.

- **Thank them for their time and make sure you arrange to follow up.**

At the conclusion of the meeting, always ask for time in the future. Ask if you get some more related information to share with them if they would entertain a phone call or another visit. Ask them the best way to communicate. Do they like email, phone calls or is in person better. And last, thank them and make sure you do.

- **Now what?**

You have now just become the smartest guy on the planet as it relates to the senators opinion of our legislative agenda. Be prepared to share it. If they support us we can send them a thank you for their time and continued support. If they don't, we can outline a plan to change their mind. After all, they agreed when you visited that if you got them what they needed they would. Write it down while it's still fresh. Don't wait till the next meeting to share it. Get with your district or state leadership and get them as smart as you currently are so they can help.

Please, if you have any questions or what to practice your pitch on someone give me a buzz or drop me an email. That's why I am here.

You'll do great!

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