

Advocacy Process Explained by Malcolm Toland of CCP

There are 5 stages in the advocacy process:

- a. identify and prioritise issues;
- b. research and understand issues and their impacts;
- c. formulating a position on the issue;
- d. advocating/influencing decision makers; and
- e. follow up with implementation, and communicating the status of the implementation.

The direct advocacy to decision makers is probably the heart of every advocacy campaign and what one needs to do is consider: what outcome do we want; what will be the campaign's essential message; which stakeholders are most influential and what tools can we use to reach them.

The most important tool is probably the position paper on the issue. It is critical that this be done well. It does not need to be more than 3-4 pages and should succinctly address the problem and harm being caused, options for addressing the problem, the chosen solution and the impact of this solution on the sector, and finally an implementation plan for the suggested solution that identifies who needs to do what, and when. And try to include the most compelling arguments possible in making a case for change.

The content of a good position paper can be used in a variety of other ways i.e. as text for a speech, as text for a newspaper feature, etc.

The most common advocacy 'errors' made by business associations include:

- a. taking on too many issues;
- b. limited role for members of the association in prioritising issues and participating in the campaign itself;
- c. position papers not sufficiently grounded in evidence;
- d. Secretariat capacity challenges;
- e. lack of actionable advocacy strategies based on work plans identifying who needs to do what, and by when;
- f. an inconsistent presentation of the message.