

Eight Essential Rules for Delivering a Message

Regardless of the situation you find yourself in, there are eight essential rules to effectively communicate your message. Keep these rules in mind whether you are speaking to a large group or even to one individual.

Passion: You have to speak with real passion if you want to get and hold the attention of your audience. Believe in what you want to say and say it with great conviction. Remember, if you lack passion for your subject, how can you interest anyone else?

Know Your Member and Staff Person: Have a good idea of what interest your particular member has in your issue. This is vital to making a good presentation. You can do everything else well, but if what you're saying is irrelevant to them, you will not be effective. Be sure to demonstrate how the issue you represent affects them, their constituency and their district and state. Thus, you need to do some homework.

Know Your Topic: Knowing the topic is similar to knowing your audience; you are there because of your passion and knowledge of your issue. Be sure to have your briefing materials from your Hill Day Kit studied, reviewed and on hand during the meeting.

Have A Clear Objective: Know what you want. Meetings and interviews are often very short. You need to make sure to get your message across right away. Before your meeting think of a few key phrases that amplify your message in a succinct and memorable manner. During the meeting you can find places to insert this important message clearly.

Explain What's At Stake: Spell out in very specific terms what you want to do and what will happen if it isn't done. Explain why your issue (whether it is the PATRIOT Act, Racial Profiling or Data-mining) is important to them by demonstrating the alternative in strong terms. Use convincing facts and figuring to support your position.

Put a Human Face On It: A great way to speak passionately is to give an example of how your issue has affected and will affect real people-maybe even you.

Keep The Big Picture In Mind: Knowing your issue is the first step, but to really connect with the audience, you must keep your topic in perspective with what is happening in the specific district and state your Member or staff person is from. Adding this perspective makes the topic current and critical. Give your listener that perspective and they are more likely to understand the importance of your message.

Empower the Audience: Give your member or staff person an opportunity to get on board and involved. You've captivated them with your passion and shared your knowledge of the issue: now don't let them off the hook. Before you finish, make sure you have their buy-in. Give them a specific opportunity to commit to take some action to advance your goal and they will become a powerful advocate.