What State Legislators Look for in an Effective Presentation of State Program Needs

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Summary of Today’s Presentation

Primary Goal:
• Provide you with some simple guidelines for making effective presentations to legislators

What I’ll Cover Today:
• How to structure the presentation
  – *Three Parts: introduction, body, conclusion*
• Five rules to live by for legislative presentations
How To Structure An Effective Presentation
How To Structure An Effective Presentation

Figure out:

– What message are you trying to communicate?
  • A request for additional funding or resources
  • Opposition or support for proposed policy changes

– What supports that message?
  • If you’re asking for resources, what do you need them for? What happens if you don’t get them?
  • If you support a policy change, what are the benefits?
How To Structure An Effective Presentation

Present your message in three parts:

• Tell them what you’re going to tell them (the Preview)

• Tell them (the Body)

• Tell them what you told them (the Conclusion)
How To Structure An Effective Presentation
Part 1: The Preview

• Establish a rapport with the committee:
  – Thank the chair (more on this later)
  – Introduce yourself
  – Identify any handouts

• Preview your message (tell them what you’re going to tell them).
  – Clearly state the message
  – Lay out your main points
  – This gives the committee a road map for the presentation
How To Structure An Effective Presentation
Part 2: The Body

• Support your message by explaining the main points (*tell them*).

• Here are some examples:

  – Main Point: New federal regulations have increased our workload (What regulations? What is now required?)

  – Main Point: Declining fee revenues threaten current staffing levels (Why have they declined? By how much? How many staff?)

  – Main Point: Reduced staffing threatens public safety (What might happen? How bad would that be?)
How To Structure An Effective Presentation

Part 2: The Body

• Here’s a tip:
  – Some people respond to data (just the facts).
  – Others respond to stories (paint them a picture).
  – Whenever possible, use both anecdotes and data.
How To Structure An Effective Presentation
Part 3: The Conclusion

• Summarize your message and the main points (tell them what you’ve told them)

• Provides a clear ending the presentation and a transition to questions
How To Structure An Effective Presentation

Summary of how to structure the presentation:

• Figure out what you’re trying to communicate (the message) and what supports that message (the main points).

• Preview your message at the start of the presentation.

• Build the message through the body of the presentation by explaining the main points.

• Bring the presentation to a close by summarizing the message in the Conclusion.
Five More Rules To Live By
Five More Rules To Live By

1. Remember the chair is in charge.
2. Respect the committee’s time.
3. Know the protocols in advance.
4. Be over-prepared for questions and answers.
5. No matter what happens, stay professional.
Five More Rules To Live By

#1 – *Remember the Chair Is In Charge*

- The chair runs the meeting.
  - Everyone (including the other committee members) looks to the chair for permission to speak.

- For you as a presenter, this means:
  - Take questions when the chair feels it’s appropriate.
  - Let the chair decide who gets to ask the next question.
  - Ask permission before bringing anyone else up to address the committee.
Five More Rules To Live By

#2 – Respect the Committee’s Time

• Make sure that you are on time (actually, be early).

• Know how much time you have—and stay within it.

• Be prepared to shorten the presentation if needed.
Five More Rules To Live By

#3 – *Know the Protocols in Advance*

- Before the hearing, find out from the committee secretary (or other staff):
  - The room.
  - The time hearing starts.
  - The order of the speakers.
  - How much time you will have. (Remember #2)
  - If you need to provide handouts (you almost always will).
  - How many copies, to whom, and when?
Five More Rules To Live By

#4 – Be Over-Prepared for Questions & Answers

• Be ready to answer questions.
  – Your chance to really demonstrate you know what you’re talking about.
  – Not being able to answer questions can be frustrating to legislators.

• When answering: (1) pause, (2) think, and (3) answer.
  – Helps you understand the question.
  – Helps prevent you from rambling.
  – Keeps you from accidentally interrupting the committee member.
# Five More Rules To Live By

## #4 – Be Over-Prepared for Questions & Answers

- You don’t have to answer questions that really are comments.
  - “That’s one way of looking at it.”

- If you don’t have the information requested, remember these eight words:
  - “No, but I can get that for you.”
Five More Rules To Live By

#5 – No Matter What Happens, Stay Professional

• Committee members may ask questions that seem out of left field.
  – Answer them as best you can. (Remember the eight words.)

• Committee members or other conferees may be very blunt in their disagreement with you.
  – Maintain your composure and don’t react.

• No matter what, never get into a public confrontation with a committee member.
Conclusion

• Figure out what your **message** is and how to support it.
• Lay out your message in the **preview**.
• Support the message with the **body** of the presentation.
• Restate the message in the **conclusion**.
• Remember the **five rules to live by**.
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