

Hi. This is Chris Micheli. I'm with the Sacramento governmental relations firm of Aprea & Micheli and an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law. Thanks for joining today's podcast on lobbying support services.

In addition to the actual lobbying that advocates do at the executive and legislative branches of the government here in the state of California, there are important support services that are provided to lobbyists either by their employer or by their lobbying firm. For the employer, it's for those lobbyists who work for an individual company or a trade association. In a lobbying firm, it's for those who are contract lobbyists.

There are actually some firms-- mainly in our nation's capital, that work to support lobbying efforts such as managing coalitions, directing grassroots campaigns, conducting public outreach, or other indirect efforts to enhance or promote the direct lobbying efforts made by lobbyists. There are a handful of public affairs firms in Sacramento that do the same type of work.

Additional efforts either in-house or from a public affairs firm could include helping to organize lobby days, gather and researching data, engaging in educational efforts, planning receptions or events, otherwise creating materials to help the lobbying team such as background papers or even letter writing campaigns. There are firms that specialize in social media lobbying, including website and media efforts that support the lobbying of decision makers.

There's also strategic communications and public relations firms. They engage communication efforts including letters to the editor, opinion editorial pieces, press conferences and the like. Whether created in-house or by a contract firm, the development of advocacy support materials is an important role for those who staff lobbying efforts. For example, drafting letters of support or opposition, developing key talking points, one pagers, researching the legal or legislative history of issues.

They're all important support services for direct lobbying efforts. These activities can often make the difference in a lobbying campaign in either the Legislature or at a particular administrative agency or department. In addition, whether advocating for or against legislation or even regulations, building a broad-based coalition to advance your cause will likely help a lobbying client's success.

It's important to have a coalition to make your advocacy efforts successful, especially if the bill or regulation is controversial or will require substantial work to get adopted or to be defeated. Leading or working with a coalition can often result in success for your lobbying efforts, therefore it's important to bring together a broad and diverse group of interests to promote your direct lobbying efforts.

While many bills or regulations do not require as much outside support efforts, there are always issues that require "a heavy lift" and that are better served with a coordinated direct and indirect lobbying effort. Grassroots organizing is another valuable avenue to support lobbying efforts. This can be done through phone calls, emails, letter writing, [and] visits to decision makers - particularly in their district.

Public support is often needed to help persuade lawmakers that legislation is necessary or for agency officials, that a rulemaking effort is needed. As such,

communicating with groups at the local level is valuable to demonstrate widespread support for your lobbying efforts.

There are also instances when strategic planning is necessary, as well as to try and prepare to capitalize on any opportunities that might advance your client's lobbying interests or even to prepare for potential legislative or regulatory threats against your client's interest or their industry. Preparing for the upcoming legislative session, or a rulemaking calendar, means planning for your efforts and determining the proper timeline that you'll work with, anticipating changes in circumstances, the ability to respond to those changes and modify your strategic plans as necessary will prove a successful outcome in the end.

Whether you utilize public relations, grassroots, grasstops, or other means to support your lobbying efforts, a lobbyist and client will need to determine all of the possible tools to utilize in their campaign to support or to oppose legislation or regulations.

A well developed and executed strategic plan will have the ability to evaluate the proper and appropriate use of both direct and indirect lobbying activities to ensure their success and what lobbying support services will be needed for the effort. Thanks for joining this podcast on looking at lobbying support services.