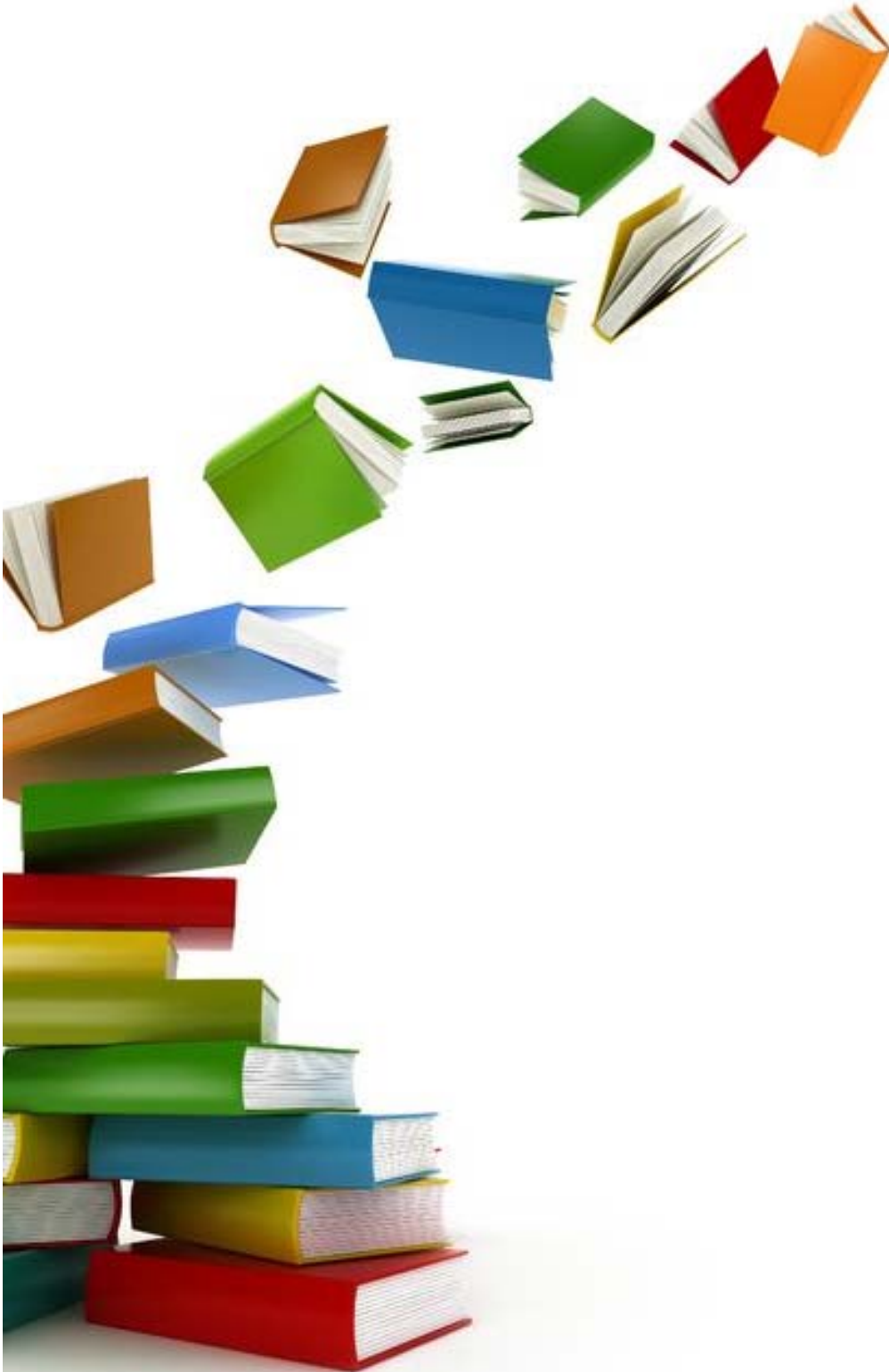


Public policy dialogue & advocacy



Influencing & argumentation

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This workbook has been written by the team of the Business Advocacy Fund and edited by David irwin

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Public policy dialogue & advocacy

Influencing & argumentation

1. Introduction

The Business Advocacy Fund supports business member organisations (BMOs) to engage in private public dialogue and to advocate an improved business environment. Grants are provided to support proposals which most closely meet the Fund's criteria and objectives and which are regarded as having the best chance of making an impact. This financial support is complemented by personalised capacity building and a range of training programmes.

An important part of advocacy is influencing – bringing people round to your point of view and acting accordingly. Influencing and negotiating are closely related. Negotiation, like bargaining, tends to imply that both parties have agreed in principle and are simply haggling as for example when you go to buy a car. So employers' organisations, trades unions and government may negotiate over issues like the minimum wage. But in most cases, there is no expectation that you will compromise and indeed maybe not even converge on the policy imperative; so your ability to influence depends on your ability to marshal the evidence and make a persuasive case. If other interest groups are with you, it may make the influencing easier; if they are opposed to your position, it will make it harder.

The aim of this handbook is to introduce the essential skills of influencing. By the end of the book you will:

- Understand the principles of influencing
- Be able to marshal reasoned arguments in support of a stated position
- Understand the principles of negotiating
- Understand the steps required to influence successfully
- Have a greater level of self-esteem and self-confidence

2. Argumentation

The starting point for effective influence is having appropriate and objective research evidence. This is covered in unit 2.1 (understanding and framing issues) and module 7 (research methods). You can then use the evidence to prepare a reasoned and compelling argument. You will, in time, write this into a policy position. Argumentation is the thought process in which you develop an argument. Argument assumes that there is more than one point of view and indeed that the points of view may be directly contradictory. An argument is simply the logical and systematic presentation of reason and supporting evidence intended to convince an audience to accept a particular point of view. Argument is rational. It does not depend on emotion or threat.

Argumentation depends on evidence which can be fact or opinion.

Facts offer objective data and can be proven. Facts may come from scientific measurement, or from the way nature works, or from observation, or from statistics. If factual evidence is poorly presented, you will quickly find that the parties are arguing over the facts rather than the conclusions to be drawn from the facts.

Opinions are personal views or judgements. They cannot be proven but can be legitimate if they come from an expert in a particular field. Opinions need to be credible.

Whilst stories are specific, a good narrative – perhaps an example of how a business has suffered from poor regulation – can be good way of making a specific point.

Many people argue, both orally and in writing, in ways that are aggressive and inflammatory. That is always counter-productive. Your audience will be much more likely to listen if you are calm and create a rapport such that everyone feels able to express their point of view. Indeed, you may even modify your own arguments and position in response.

In preparing your argument, recognise that there are always other points of view. Think about those and explain in your own argument why you think they are inappropriate. Fisher & Ury (2011) recommend that you think about the way in which critics might respond to your target audience adopting your point of view. Then write two or three sentences to help your target audience defend their decision.

Kuhn & Crowell (2011) suggest that there are three ways in which people prepare arguments: the single perspective, in which they set out the advantages of their favoured position; the dual perspective, in which they additionally set out the cons of an opposing position; and, the integrative perspective, in which they include the pros and cons of all positions.

You may want to concede early on that a proposal will not completely solve a problem but rather that it will make a start on solving the problem. This will help to establish the limits of your argument.

Kuhn & Crowell (2011) found, in their research, that the best way to prepare an argument is to work in small groups: to generate reasons for your own position; to formulate questions to secure additional evidence; to evaluate reasons and rank their importance; and, to anticipate alternative arguments and prepare responses.

In preparing your argument, remember:

- You need a powerful opening statement and a powerful closing statement;
- You need to be as specific as possible;
- Address the counter-arguments, but do so respectfully;
- Choose your words and writing style carefully and match it to your audience;
- Strike a balance between credible fact and authoritative opinion;
- Visuals in a document can provide a powerful way to convey a key message;

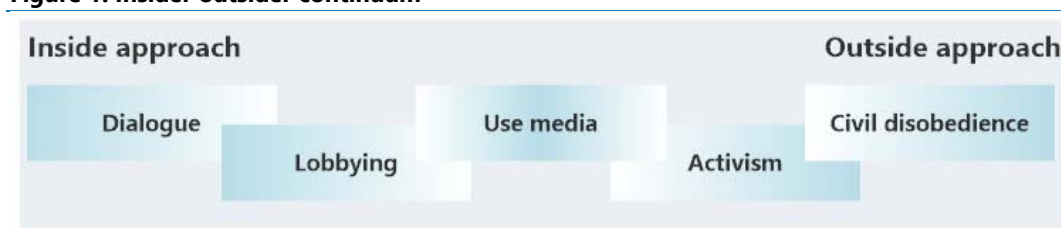
- Ensure in written documents that you always end with your argument, rather than someone else's, so that the reader has your position at the front of their mind as they stop reading.

3. Influencing

Influencing is used to describe an activity whereby you seek to persuade a person or organisation round to your point of view and then to act in a specific way or to support a viewpoint or action. In the case of private sector advocacy, the aim may be to persuade a Ministry or Agency or municipal authority to repeal an existing regulatory requirement, or to implement a proposal for a new regulation in such a way that it is less burdensome than it might otherwise have been, or to enforce an existing regulation, or to create a new regulation, or to stop something that the public agency is allowing to happen, such as a corrupt practice.

Influence requires a compelling message – evidence, narrative, reason (and you will have that if you have taken time to prepare your argument – but it also requires honesty, integrity and trust. However, the approach that you employ to influence policy makers is also likely to make a difference. Going directly to policy makers – taking the insider approach – and engaging in dialogue or lobbying gives you a chance to have a two-way communication and thus to hear, and perhaps address, objections. Conversations should always be followed up with written submissions, to reinforce your key points and arguments and to leave a reminder with your target audience. Using the media, or talking via intermediaries, only allows for one-way communication which is likely to be less effective, though it can be a good way of demonstrating the extent of public support for the issue. Grass roots campaigns, demonstrations and other forms of activism – the outside approach – tend to be less effective still, at least for the types of issues pursued by business associations.

Figure 1: Insider outsider continuum

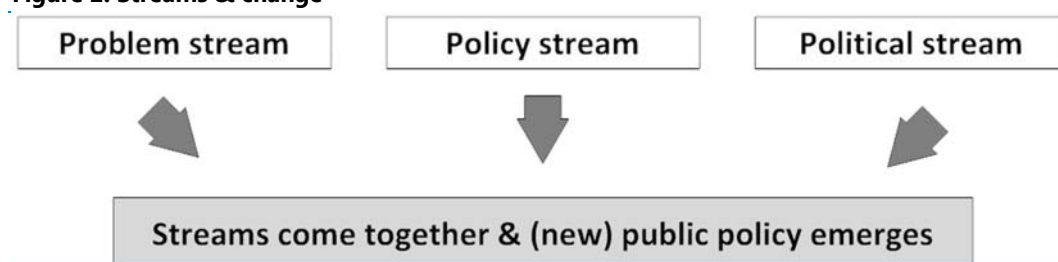


Influence may need to occur at different times: to put an issue on the 'agenda', to encourage a particular option to address the issue, to ensure a decision is implemented. In all cases, your strategy may include directly influencing the decision makers but may additionally or alternatively revolve around influencing those who in turn influence the decision makers. You will need a plan embracing those with whom you need to communicate and your messages – we will cover that in 5.1 Planning an Advocacy Project – and here will focus on the skills of influence.

Kingdon (2003) notes that there are many problems for people in government to solve: the "problem stream". There are many people – researchers, advisers, etc – all of whom have policy ideas to solve the problems: the "policy stream".

Sometimes a champion, or a policy entrepreneur, or an effective pressure groups, will pick up a policy proposal and run with it. This requires patience and persistence. Often, however, nothing happens until the “political stream” – public mood, elections, catastrophe – changes.

Figure 2: Streams & change



There are several ways in which you can begin your advocacy activity. You can engage in dialogue with policy makers. This implies a mutual desire for a conversation and perhaps therefore recognition by the policy makers that there is a problem to be solved. You can lobby policy makers. This is still likely to face to face but implies that you have first to persuade the policy makers that there is a problem. If you cannot secure access, you may start in some other way, through the media perhaps. Your first objective has to be secure a meeting with the relevant public officials.

Much influencing is undertaken through engaging in public private dialogue (PPD). The World Bank explains that PPD is the structured interaction between the public and private sectors in promoting the right conditions for private sector development, improvements to the business climate, and poverty reduction. It is about stakeholders coming together to define and analyse problems, discuss and agree on specific reforms, and then working to ensure that these ideas become a reality. PPD provides:

- A conversation
- An opportunity to understand each other’s point of view
- A forum to share information, opinion and policy ideas
- An opportunity to understand driving forces, such as political or commercial imperatives
- A forum to promote balanced decisions which lead to buy-in from public & private sectors
- A mechanism to follow-up decisions & monitor implementation

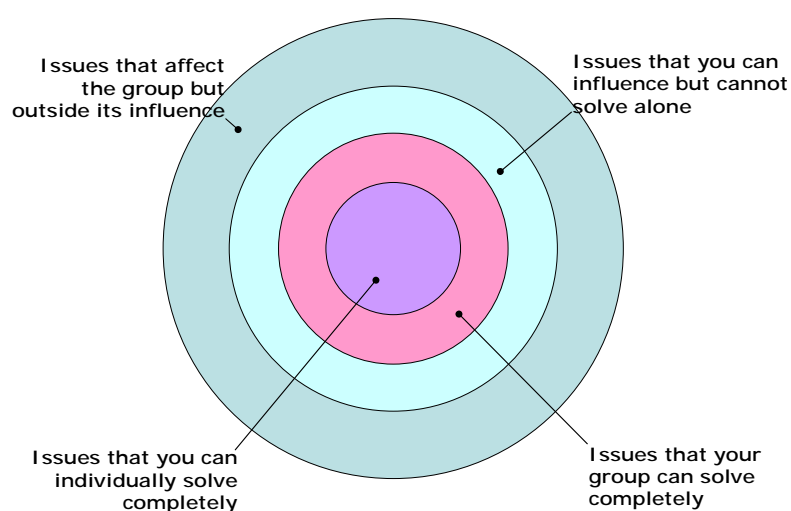
Bettcher *et al.* (2015) note that “governments that listen to the private sector are more likely to design credible reforms and win support for their policies. Dialogue improves the flow of information and builds legitimacy; it improves trust and understanding.”

Negotiation, however, is often a zero-sum game: for one side to do ‘better’, the other side has to do ‘worse’. Effective dialogue will look for positions that balance all interests so that everyone feels that they have done better. You will find this

easier if you focus on interests rather than positions. See yourself as working with government to solve a mutual problem, not as fighting the government. Look for mutual gain. Influencing is rather more amorphous – and may include disputes over the facts themselves.

Think of the target audiences that have to be influenced as a series of concentric circles. A good advocacy strategy directs the BMO's energy towards maximising influence through the inner circles – acting effectively and efficiently on those issues within its circle of influence, while making systematic effort to bring more issues of concern within the circles of influence.

Figure 3: Circles of influence



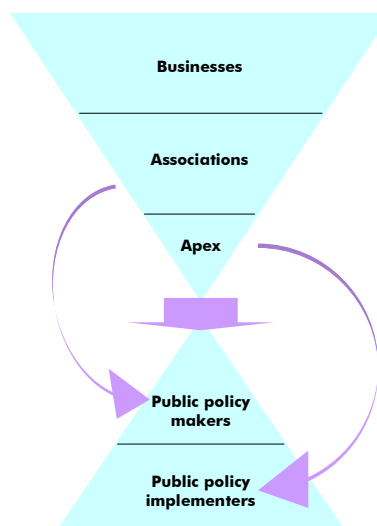
Source: Maer Associates

When people think about negotiation, they visualise the need for two parties to come to a mutually acceptable solution. Influencing is often more encompassing, not least because there may be more than two parties involved and because influencers often seek to work through others – opinion formers – in their efforts to influence the ultimate target. Influencing a Minister in the Government will be far easier if the Minister thinks that 90 per cent of the population backs a specific proposal rather than just one per cent. Influencing may also be easier if there are third parties, such as apex bodies, that can open doors.

You may find that success requires that you work with and through a number of different parties – civil servants, Ministers, Parliamentarians, for example – not only to bring them round to your point of view but also to encourage them to advocate your position. This will require sustained effort over a period of time.

There will also be occasions when you are seeking to influence public policy in the knowledge that another stakeholder is trying to influence the Government in a different direction. This means that the policy maker has to choose between mutually incompatible demands – say between businesses and consumers – or has to find an acceptable balance. That is why gathering good evidence can make a big difference to your ability to influence policy makers and opinion formers.

Figure 4: Exerting influence through third parties



Source: Irwin Grayson Associates

4. Principles for successful influencing

The first step in achieving successful influence is to take the initiative: recognising – rather than just waiting, wishing and moaning – the policies and activities that need to be different. The influencing mindset moves away from just complaining to specifying clearly what needs doing and setting about getting it done. Successful influencing requires a healthy combination of interpersonal, communication, presentation and assertiveness skills. It also requires the consideration of a range of options, good preparation and clear prioritisation. To be successful, you need:

- **To be clear about the change(s) required:** Whether at personal or group level, influencing requires adapting and modifying your personal style as you become aware of the effect you are having on other people.
- **Understand yourself and the effect you have on others:** If others perceive you as opposing them, that will shape how they interpret anything you propose or question that you ask. Influencing is generally two way – the party that you are aiming to influence will most likely want to influence you to change your position as well.
- **Do not manipulate others:** It is sometimes tempting to exert influence through coercion and manipulation. You might occasionally even succeed but that is not really influencing. It is forcing people to do what you want, often against their will. It fails the test of influencing because it does not win support. In fact, over the long term, it works against you.
- **Take others' views into consideration:** Invite the other party to put their point of view, so that they don't feel forced – especially if they actually do agree with the action proposed. Where they disagree, people are far more willing to come halfway (or more) if they feel acknowledged, understood and appreciated. Because they feel good about making the choice, people may even end up doing or agreeing to something they would not previously have done.

- **Be positive:** Emphasise the positive aspects of your case, rather than being overly critical of the existing public policy position. Look for ways to help policy makers look good by supporting your case.
- **Even when you disagree, do not cause embarrassment:** One of the most powerful forces affecting behaviour is the avoidance of humiliation. No one wants to be embarrassed so take care – offer to work with them, provide them the ammunition that they need to work on your behalf within the organisation.

People don't like to feel manipulated, so take care with your approach.

Remember, too, that the people you are trying to influence will be assessing your motives, so be open about your objectives.

5. Steps for successful influencing

Influencing and negotiating skills are very similar and the steps to success are also very similar. Effective influencing requires that you:

- Identify the right people to influence and, if possible, get to know them through regular dialogue;
- Adopt appropriate behaviours and attitudes;
- Engage in effective communication;
- Build rapport with your target audiences;
- Are clear about your objectives;
- Ask questions. Fisher & Ury (2011) suggest that "statements generate resistance whereas questions generate answers".
- Are confident in your position (which requires that you have good research) and able to offer compelling arguments in a logical, rational and reasoned way;
- Listen: if the other side perceives that you are listening to them, they will be more like to listen to you. Ensure that you understand their position.
- Sometimes, you may find it helpful to reframe the discussion: move the focus from position to interests, or to options, or to standards.
- Network widely, build coalitions, mobilise public support.

Influencing requires that you build support and trust, not that you bully and cajole.

In the workplace, people sometimes seek to exert influence through coercion and manipulation, perhaps because they are in a position of power, and they may succeed in getting things done, but that isn't influencing. That's forcing people to do something, often against their will, and that won't succeed in winning support.

The objective is to persuade a target audience to accept, and ideally then to espouse on your behalf a certain viewpoint.

You will need to understand the target audience and particularly the values, attitudes, emotions, perceptions and motives that drive them. Sometimes you may find that it is necessary only to use economic arguments; other times you may need to present a case in such a way as to draw on national pride.

Fisher & Ury (2011) suggest that rather than trying to defend your proposal, when it is challenged, you reiterate your underlying interests. And then ask the other side if they can think of a way of addressing those interests whilst at the same time addressing their own. If the conflict appears irreconcilable, ask why one side's priorities should take precedence.

Start by ensuring a clear awareness of the issue through articulating the facts – say, this regulation costs 90 per cent of our members 10 per cent of their income because – rather than making judgemental observations. However, there can be merit in following the facts with feelings, though this has to be treated carefully – as a result, they are very frustrated with the government...

Once the facts have been accepted, the next step is to promote a change of attitude. Negotiation is often adversarial; wherever possible, you should aim to be collaborative - "We are on the same side on this". Indeed, it is not unusual to find that you really are on the same side, but that the official needs the evidence that you can bring to support the case for change.

The most important part of influencing is offering a solution. You could ask the person whom you are trying to influence if they have ideas, but it is usually better if you can offer a proposal. Offering a benefit to the person or organisation that you are aiming to influence makes a big difference. We are not talking here about personal benefit! For example – enforcing the performing rights legislation will increase our members' income by an average of 20 per cent and that will mean the government gets extra tax income. Benefits could also include public praise, an improved environment leading to more businesses and more jobs, etc.

- Identify the issue and be clear about the desired end result;
- Identify the stakeholders who need to be influenced;
- Research where they are 'coming from'; understand their needs and the other pressures on them, perhaps from other groups seeking to influence their thinking in a different direction;
- Research the issue to ensure that you have all the facts at your finger tips;
- Identify and quantify the benefits to both private and public sectors;
- Be flexible in your demands – a partial move in your direction is better than no movement at all;
- Develop an influencing plan; Build coalitions and seek support from other groups who, in turn, might be able to assist you to influence the key stakeholders;
- Launch the influencing activities, build momentum, regularly monitor progress and amend the plan as necessary.

6. Building rapport

Rapport is about meeting people on their own level, making them feel at home and so developing a feeling of warmth and well-being. Carkhuff (1969) identified eight core variables in communication, all of which will help you here. These are not in any order of priority.

- Empathy - showing acceptance and understanding of the feeling state of the individual;
- Positive regard - showing interest and attention, demonstrating concern - this is very effectively achieved using voice tone;
- Respect - not judging or evaluating, treating the person as an equal;
- Genuineness - being sincere, showing that you are not playing a role or maintaining a façade;
- Concreteness - being specific, avoiding vague terms or jargon;
- Self-disclosure - being unafraid to reveal your own feelings, when relevant to the discussion;
- Confrontation - saying it like it is. Confrontation must be presented with warmth, respect and empathy and must be specific if it is to be useful and helpful; otherwise it is hurtful and punishing; and,
- Immediacy - openly responding to the relationship and developing it to deal with the current situation.

Building rapport is a skill you can learn and develop by being aware of your own feelings and by reading other people's body language to determine their true feelings. Remember that we often don't express ourselves directly, but if the words and the gestures don't match, you can bet it's what you are seeing that is the true picture. Think about what might have caused the discomfort, whether it's expressed as anger, embarrassment or whatever. Be alert at all times for situations in which you experience a "bad feeling". Try to identify the cause of that feeling, to pinpoint what it was that failed to build rapport between you and the other person. Now you are becoming aware of what you should avoid doing in order to avoid creating bad feeling in the people you communicate with. Look also for the reasons why things go well. Identify techniques that work for you, try them out in different situations, develop your skill.

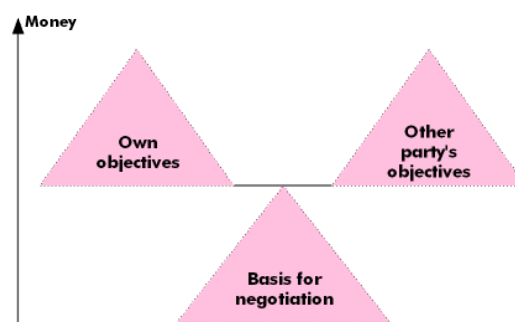
If you work at this consciously for a while, you will find that it becomes second nature to act in a way that builds rapport with others and this will pay dividends not only in your professional life but in your personal life as well.

7. Negotiating skills

Whilst we have noted that influence and negotiation are not the same, there are similarities and it is perhaps worth touching briefly on negotiating skills. In any negotiation, you quickly need to discover the likelihood that you might be able to reach a satisfactory agreement. This may be thought of as an overlap of objectives. For example, in the market place, a seller may be seeking to maximise the sale price, but has a price below which they must not go. Similarly, a buyer

may want to minimise the purchase price, but will have a maximum above which they will not buy.

In any successful negotiation you are concerned with three key elements: You need to know your own objectives. You need to plan and prepare for your negotiations. If you are negotiating, say, a sale or a purchase in relation to your business, then it is likely that you will already have sufficient knowledge. However, if you are negotiating a topic with which you are less familiar, say on behalf of a trade association, then it is essential to research the topic thoroughly in advance. As the negotiation progresses, you need to learn as much as you can about the other party's objectives.



8. Five steps to successful negotiation

You can use the mnemonic “Partners Don’t Pick Bad Arguments” to remember the steps in the negotiating process, which are as follows:

8.1 Prepare

Always prepare thoroughly. Do the necessary research and gather the evidence. As far as possible, identify both sides’ ideal and realistic settlements. Discuss these with colleagues and other interested parties to ensure that your assessment is reasonably accurate. Identify the likely range within which the outcome will fall and issues that are open for compromise and those that are not. There will still be times when you must think on your feet and respond to the unexpected, but try to minimise the possibility. Decide your objectives and, as you will be assertive rather than aggressive, decide your fall-back position. Categorise them as follows:

- must achieve;
- intend to achieve; and,
- would like to achieve.

Negotiations often involve a compromise, so you need to decide what you are not prepared to concede. Think of all the solutions which may be offered to you and decide in advance which are acceptable.

Once your objectives are established, do enough research to be sure of your facts. Gather and analyse the information that is available; undertake or commission additional research if necessary. Then plan your strategy. What will your opening offer be? What are you prepared to trade?

Try to assess the needs of the other person in the negotiation by listing the information under must achieve, intend to achieve and would like to achieve. What will they need to get out of the deal? Use any previous knowledge of the person or organisation to work out what stance they are likely to take. Do not make assumptions.

Determine your overall negotiation strategy. Base this on the type of negotiation – it may be formal or informal, one-off or over a period of time – depending on who is negotiating for what. Break down the negotiation points. Do not initially think in terms of tackling A, then B, then C, in sequence. Plan to consider issue C, for example as if issues, A and B do not exist. Focus on issues planning and avoid sequence planning. The advantage of issues planning over sequence planning is flexibility. It also limits the harm done to the overall negotiation by serious disagreement on just one aspect.

As part of your preparation, you should also think about what you need to do to create the climate for a successful negotiation. Irrespective of the nature of discussion to be held, one should enter the location for the discussion upright, confident and with an open disposition.

8.2 Discuss

You know what you hope to achieve - the discussion stage is where you establish the other party's objectives and requirements.

Find common ground. Do not concentrate on areas of conflict – give attention at the outset to anticipated common ground so that can put on one side the areas where you have agreement and perhaps result in an appropriate compromise being made.

Once you have both sides of the story, you are in a position to progress.

Maintain eye contact which is important as it conveys credibility and confidence. Respond to the mood and tempo of the negotiation process but don't lose sight of your goals. If you are not clear about the procedure and protocols to be followed, now would be a good time to clarify. You will need to sustain personal interaction throughout the discussion and keep the talks on track.

8.3 Propose

The opening phase of a negotiation involves both sides presenting their starting positions to one another. Offer proposals and find out what the other person is prepared to trade in return. At this stage, nothing is set in stone - you are tentatively exploring possibilities.

This is the time to ensure that the information received is accurate. Both sides may have given facts and arguments, to convince each other of their case. However, statistics can be misused, facts may be wrong and emotional appeals might have been made. It is always sensible to test the other's statements.

When both parties have satisfactorily explored the issues, the requirements to be mentioned in the bidding phase should be summarised.

8.4 Bargain

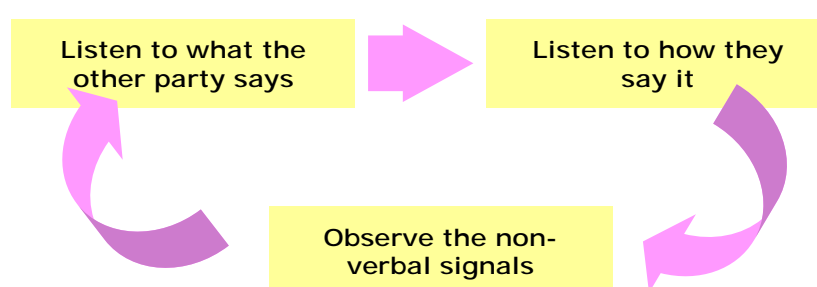
You are now moving to firmer ground and your bargaining and trading should take you forward to agreement.

After discussing each other's requirements and exchanging information, the bargaining can start. It is important not to start bargaining too early - you may miss important concession areas or information. Generally, you receive more if you ask for more. If conflict arises at this point, indicate that your opening offer is not necessarily what you will finally accept.

When your offer is made, state this clearly. If you use the word "about", an experienced negotiator can challenge on a variety of issues, and change your offer dramatically.

Throughout the negotiation, examine the other party's reaction and messages to understand their stance and specific objectives.

Figure 5: Total listening



Source: Maer Associates

When the offer has been made, the next step is to find out exactly what it includes. Ask for clarification. You will have prepared a list of your requirements in the pre-negotiation stage, so ensure that your needs have been met. The points to remember when making an offer are:

- Aim high - you can reduce your demands later.
- Make a positive offer.
- Ask for clarification of offers you receive.

The next stage is the most vital phase of the whole negotiating process. The offer has been made, and the two parties have to ensure that this is mutually acceptable. All the issues to be negotiated need to be identified. At this stage, concessions may be introduced. Trade items that are of little value to you, but of great importance to the other party, in exchange for items of great importance to yourself.

If you are offered a concession, it can be dealt with in four ways:

- Be grateful - and ask for more.
- Trade with a smaller concession.
- Accept it and continue talking.
- If it was too small, act as though you had not heard it.

Do not trade all your concessions at once. If they are given too early, the other party may expect more. Also, you should record all concessions, to ensure no

misunderstandings occur. No deals are binding until the contract has been agreed.

When making concessions or offering counter-proposals, flexibility should be maintained. This should reduce the possibility of a deadlock. If an agreement cannot be reached on one issue, discuss all the other issues and then return to the final point of disagreement, with the aim of finding a solution.

Avoid immediate counter – proposals. These introduce additional options, sometimes whole new issues, which cloud the clarity of the negotiation. The other side may well be unreceptive because they are still concerned with their initial proposal.

Do not get involved in a spiral of defence or attack. Negotiations do involve conflict but attack and defence never take the process forward. So avoid getting heated and emotional. Once one side attacks, the other tend to defend itself automatically; the exchanges become more and more heated and the downward spiral starts.

Give indicators of your intentions. Provide hints to the other party of how you are going to behave because it enables them take a more considered approach. For example say, "Can we talk about the price now?" "If I could make a suggestion..." This technique also reduces ambiguity. It also introduce a structure which helps keep the negotiation on a rational level. All these create joint ownership of the entire negotiation – and a shared commitment to its outcomes.

8.5 Agree

The final stage; an agreement satisfactory to both parties is arrived at and documentation, if appropriate, drawn up to seal the agreement.

When agreement is in sight, the energy level of the negotiators may increase. Other signs to watch for are verbal indications - "maybe" "perhaps", and non-verbal - papers may be placed in briefcases. It is time to summarise what has been discussed and agreed. Do not start bargaining again.

It is vital to ensure that all points discussed have been clarified. An action plan may be required, giving details of deadlines and allocating tasks.

Test understanding by offering a summary of what has been agreed. This will give a chance to confirm or correct any decisions. Ensure that all concessions have been agreed as part of the total package. It is too easy to feel relieved at the final stage and overlook some detail that could disrupt the whole negotiation.

Use the trial closes. For example, "Is it fair to suggest that we have now discussed all the points?" Although "Your pen or mine to sign the deal?" can be used as a humorous way to test the water, care is required that it does not suggest that the whole negotiation and the consequences were also just play. The response to the trial close may not be an agreement, but it will probably indicate how far away the other party is from a conclusion.

If there is any disagreement, it may be necessary for negotiations to recommence until a successful outcome is reached again. It is worth writing a minute of the meeting or, failing that, following up with a letter documenting the agreement made and, ideally, who will be responsible for what action together with a timescale.

9. Collaborative and competitive negotiation

During negotiations, the parties on either side may take one of three generic stances:

- Negotiating towards mutual benefit.
- Negotiating to own advantage.
- Negotiating to win a fight, that is, to the other party's disadvantage.

Competitive negotiation is about one party achieving power over another party, whereas collaborative negotiation is about both parties balancing the power between them. They look for solutions that will create value for all the parties involved in the negotiating process - to create a "win-win" situation.

Amongst the best known proponents of win-win negotiation strategies are two Harvard professors, Roger Fisher and William Ury¹, who have produced a model of "principled bargaining" built around four strategies:

- Separate the people from the problem – involves communicative strategies, which accept the people as human beings and focus on the problem as a separate issue.
- Focus on interests, not positions – involves avoiding the opposing party's positional stance, but looking for the underlying interests; a communication strategy, which looks at the underlying message.
- Invest options for mutual gain – creating new opportunities based on the free exchange of information about individual need.
- Insist on objective criteria – creating or using external standards that are untouched by the bargaining process.

Collaborative negotiation can be much less intense because of the parties' attitude to power within the negotiation. Where parties set out to balance power in a relationship, this gives clear messages about the quality of the relationship and the degree to which the parties wish it to continue.

10. Tips

There are no rules, but the following pointers may help:

- Prepare well.
- The nature of the relationship, the history and the perceived equality of the parties will make a difference. If you value the relationship you will generally use collaborative strategies, which demonstrates concern for the other party;

¹ Roger Fisher and William Ury, "Getting to 'Yes'"; Hutchinson, 1990.

- Be confident, and if you don't feel confident, at least do your best to appear confident about your position and your ability in communication and persuasion;
- Allow enough time for negotiations – studies have shown that parties who face tight deadlines when negotiating will tend to use competitive strategies, though ironically these are likely to be the most time-intensive where parties are more or less equal in power;
- Being clear about your objectives and prioritise since they impact upon the negotiation process – having clear goals will mean that you are more likely to enjoy a focused discussion in which the objectives can be used to define progress and as a measure of success – but be flexible as well. It is often better to compromise and get some way to your objectives than to lose everything.
- As far as possible, be open during the negotiation process – openness is a major factor in contributing to both communication effectiveness and negotiation success. You might think that knowledge of the other party's positional strength would put them at a disadvantage. Research seems to prove the opposite to be true. Knowledge of the other party's relative weakness seems to lead the negotiating party into responding collaboratively. Such information needs to be honest and relevant.
- Do not be unnecessarily irritating. Take care about personal language, for example. Saying something like, "I'm being perfectly reasonable, don't you think?" implies that if the other party disagrees, they don't understand the meaning of the concepts of fairness and reason. Another example is drawing in the media and public attention without prior knowledge by the other party, which they might perceive as an ambush tactic.
- Respect the other party – they have objectives, too – listen carefully and don't interrupt;
- Open with a realistic offer, neither be too greedy nor sell yourself too cheaply;
- Always trade – don't give anything for nothing;
- If you need time to think, take it – ask for a short break and recap your notes.

Ensure that the outcome is mutually beneficial and that all parties leave with a feeling of well-being; that way they'll be happy to do business with you again.

11. Conclusion

Influencing is a means of encouraging others not only to adopt your point of view but also to stimulate them to act on it. There are many ways of influencing policy makers, but one of the strongest is through personal dialogue with public sector officials and Ministers. This requires having at your fingertips all the evidence and then being able to marshal the arguments in a way that is totally compelling.

There is a charter of good practice for public private dialogue which, if you are new to dialogue, may help you and your target audiences structure your interactions effectively.

Further reading and further information



- Carkhuff, R. R, (1969) *Helping and human relations*, Holt, Rhinehart & Winston
- Charter for public private dialogue
www.publicprivatedialogue.org/charter/
- Fisher, R, Ury, W, & Patton, B. (2011) *Getting to Yes: negotiating an agreement without giving in*, 3rd edition, rhBusiness Books
- Kingdon, J.W (2003) *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*, Longman
- Kuhn, D. & Crowell, A (2011) Dialogic Argumentation as a Vehicle for Developing Young Adolescents' Thinking, *Psychological Science* 22(4) 545-552, DOI: 10.1177/0956797611402512
- University of Minnesota Libraries, *Writing for Success*, baf.fyi/writing1
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This series of advocacy competence handbooks – divided into modules and units – is intended to support business member organisations (BMOs) to engage in public private dialogue and to advocate improvements to the business environment. You are free to use the units and other materials provided that the source is acknowledged.

Foundation Unit

0. Introduction to advocacy & dialogue

Module 1: The policy process

1.1 Understanding policy and regulation

1.2 Policy analysis

1.3 The process of formulating and reforming policy

Module 2: Policy positions

2.1 Identifying, understanding & framing issues

2.2 Preparing policy positions

2.3 Influence & argumentation

Module 3: Communications

3.1 Communications & public relations

3.2 Media relations & use of social media

3.3 Interview skills

Module 4: Written communications

4.1 Branding & house styles

4.2 Writing press releases

4.3 Preparing written documents

Module 5: Managing advocacy projects

5.1 Planning an advocacy project

5.2 Budgeting & financial management

5.3 Evaluation of advocacy

Module 6: Managing a BMO

6.1 Leadership, strategy & business planning

6.2 Governance and ethics

6.3 Members and member services

Module 7: Research

7. Research methods



The Business Advocacy Network is an initiative of Irwin Grayson Associates and can be found at businessadvocacy.net. IGA can be found at irwingrayson.com and contacted at david@irwin.org. You can follow David Irwin on twitter at [@drdaavidirwin](https://twitter.com/drdaavidirwin).
