



E-Advocacy *Assembly 2008*

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September 12, 2008

Essential Online Advocacy Tools

- *E-mail*: action alerts and advocacy contacts
- *Web site*: focus for advocacy information
- *E-newsletter*: outreach on important issues

- Internet: reinvented civic engagement, expanded democratic participation
- Citizens feel empowered
- Salient characteristics
 - Available to anyone
 - Fast advocacy action in a single day
 - Link advocates and policy makers



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Integrating Online and Offline

- Online advocacy campaign
 - Pieces relate, work together
 - E-mails, Web sites, e-newsletters
- Integrate online with offline
 - Relate to traditional advocacy
 - Phone calls, lobbying visits, meetings at home, media coverage



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: E-mail

More people sending more messages to Congress

- Over 200 million messages yearly – 4 x 1990's
 - 90 percent of communications
 - 100 million U.S. adults in 5 years (44% of all voting-age Americans)
- Response to alerts: 84% of communications
- More time on constituent mail: 75% Hill offices (cause: e-mail)
- Large percentage: mass form mail = preprinted postcards of '70s and '80s

Essential Online Advocacy Tools: E-mail

Getting Attention Online

- Guiding principles:
 - personally written message
 - constituent contact counts
- “3-30-3-30” rule
 - 3 seconds: subject line
 - 30 seconds: message text
 - 3 minutes: one-page issue brief
 - 30 minutes: policy paper
- Build relationships online



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Web sites Building Audiences, Informing Advocates

- Recruiting advocates on first impression
 - Showcase accomplishments, tell your story
 - Case-making information, statistics, public value
- Good organization is key
 - “Advocacy” clearly labeled
 - Don’t hide good information (“Resources” “Other Services”)
 - Least number of clicks



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Web sites

Useful Characteristics

- Serving advocates: motivated and involved
 - Post a standing action alert
 - Sample talking points; “Tell Your Legislator”
- Serving the public: good information source
 - Post documents: introduction to an issue
 - Link to reports, fact sheets, supportive letters
 - Present information in layers; readers gather as needed
- Serving legislators: arts issues research source
 - Post content on state arts issues and programs



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Web sites

State Arts Agency Approaches

- SAA Web sites and “Advocacy”
 - Advocacy front and center
 - Useful links
 - Look elsewhere
- Arizona Commission on the Arts
- Massachusetts Cultural Council



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Congressional Web Sites

- Principal point of contact
 - 92% Internet users contact through Web site
- Portal for communications
 - Ease of transmission
 - Assured acknowledgement
- Transmission controls
 - Contact information: home state or district
 - Constituent to legislator – preferred
- Legislator information
 - Sometimes informative



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: E-newsletter

Informing Advocates, Maintaining Interest

- A powerful educational tool
 - Timely information on arts policy issues
 - Advocacy tips
- Information valuable to advocates
 - Relevant trends, research-based arts facts
 - Address a specific arts policy theme
- Recruit advocates
 - Offer e-newsletter on your Web site
 - Turn a visitor into a contact
- Consider a blog: op-ed, a personal voice



Essential Online Advocacy Tools: Other Web sites – Research and Access

- Thomas
 - All things congressional
- AOL Government Guide
 - Access legislators and staff
- Open Secrets and FEC websites/search
 - Campaign contributors
- NASAA
 - All things for SAAs



E-advocacy: Final Thoughts

- Internet and e-mails expand participation
- Electronic message builds relationships and credibility
- Diverse strategies carry more weight
- Experts insist: integrate online and offline
- Power is based on trust, transacted at the personal level