

When I came to Washington, there weren't many women in senior positions around town. At least not in the Senate where I landed first. In time, with hard work, I became Legislative Director for Senator John Tower. I think there were 4 or 5 other women at that level then. Then I wanted to work at the White House in Legislative Affairs. Friends rolled their eyes. Sure. But I chugged along, and with great advice and support from some wonderful mentors (and yes...luck) I moved down Pennsylvania Avenue to join the newly-elected Reagan Administration as Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs (Senate). Now we all know the Executive Branch does not LOBBY (no sir). But I did spend 8 years trolling the halls of the Senate (no smart phones then—we had to see people) with my knee-pads on seeking Senators' support for this policy, that nominee, offering amendments, counting votes, etc. But I wasn't lobbying...nope, I was ADVOCATING. I was a government ADVOCATE. It was a great experience, I grew many lasting relationships, and the system worked.

At the end of the Reagan years, I moved to the private sector where I DID lobby as SVP of a major telecommunications trade association (NCTA). These were big years for the cable industry as major laws were enacted and the industry was making great strides in its development. I worked with and learned from some great industry leaders as well as colleagues at the association. After NCTA, I returned to government to serve as Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs for the newly-created Department of Homeland Security. After advocating there for a few years I then returned to the private sector in my current perch as Managing Director of the Prime Policy Group.

I like to think my experience has given me some insight on effective lobbying habits, and whether you advocate or lobby, I hope these hints will be helpful.

### THE RULES

The underpinning of any successful lobbying strategy is simple and common-sense: work hard and treat people like you want to be treated. Following are some specifics.

1. Return your emails, texts, calls, etc every day. If you don't have time to give a complete response, say you will work on it and get back. And do.
2. Never, NEVER, mislead anyone or skew information. No matter how smart, well-connected or popular you are, you are only as good as your word in this town. If your word isn't good, you will soon become dead meat.
3. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know". No one knows everything, and it is much better to say so than give bad info or guess and be wrong. Say you will check and get back and do just that. Otherwise, dead meat status could result.

4. Put yourself in the other person's shoes. When you lobby someone, try to understand and appreciate what their interests and concerns are, what constituencies they represent, where they stand on your issues, etc.
5. Know your issues....the good parts and the weak spots. Be prepared to offer clear, accurate talking points and background info to help educate people on your issues. Anticipate their push-back and be prepared to answer.
6. Learn to disagree agreeably. You won't win them all---no one does. Nothing is gained from burning a bridge. Remember: today's opponent may be tomorrow's ally.
7. Take your work seriously; yourself a little less so. A little humor and collegiality can make contacts into friends and build respect among your network. And you'll have more fun!
8. Remember to thank people. After a meeting or when someone helps you, always remember to email a thanks for their time, effort, etc. Everyone likes to be appreciated and this also builds good will for future contacts.
9. Finally, if you are fortunate enough to have some good mentors and friends who will offer advice and help you navigate this town, listen, use them, be grateful and most importantly...pass along the favor to others some day.