



PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMUNICATIONS TOOL KIT

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Thank you!



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KNOW YOUR PARLIAMENT

Federal

A Member of Parliament (MP) is a federally elected official who represents a 'riding' or 'constituency' in Canada and sits in the House of Commons in Ottawa. They can be elected as a Member of the Government, the Official Opposition, Opposition or an Independent. There are presently 308 ridings across Canada.

Government MPs are members of the Party with the majority of elected MPs in the House of Commons.

The **Prime Minister** (PM) is the leader of the majority party. The PM appoints Ministers, Ministers of State and Parliamentary Secretaries from his elected Members.

All other Government Members are known as backbenchers. **Backbenchers** are members of one or more committees and can be chair and vice-chairs of committees, chairs of regional or provincial caucuses. They have input into decisions made by Ministers.

A **Minister** is given a Mandate letter from the PM upon his/her appointment, is sworn in and is responsible for his/her Department. The Minister's Chief of Staff is charged to oversee the 'exempt' or Ministerial political staff and to liaise with the Department Officials in order to fulfill the expectations in the Mandate letter.

A **Minister of State** (MoS) or junior Minister, is also given a Mandate Letter from the PM and along with the Minister has an office and his/her own Chief of Staff and other staff in the Ministry. A MoS will report to the Minister responsible for the Department and in certain circumstances directly to the Prime Minister.

Minister's and Minister's of State attend Cabinet committees. They will be chair of one or more of these Committees.

A **Deputy Minister** (DM) is the Senior Department Official who oversees the Department and works with the Minister and his/her Chief of Staff to ensure the Prime Minister's Mandate is carried out along with the day-to-day operations of the Department.

A **Parliamentary Secretary** (PS) reports to the Minister and is given responsibilities by the Minister's office. A Parliamentary Secretary Assistant (PSA) has an office in the Minister's office and works on behalf of the PS between the two offices. A PS will attend committees with backbenchers.

Opposition MPs: The Official Opposition is comprised of the Party with the 2nd largest number of elected MPs. Their leader is the Leader of the Opposition. We have two Opposition Parties in Canada as well as an additional two Parties who do not have enough elected MPs to be recognized as a Party in the House; the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party. There are also Independent Members who do not belong to any Party.

Senate of Canada: The Senate is comprised of 105 unelected members who are appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of the day. There are currently Senators who are Liberal and Conservative Party Members while others sit as independents.

Prior to the July 15, 2013 cabinet shuffle, the Leader of the Government in the Senate was a member of the federal Cabinet.

The Senate has been known as the ‘House of Sober Second Thought’ as they thoroughly examine any legislation that has passed in the House of Commons before it becomes law. Senators can also introduce legislation in the Senate.

Question Period (QP)

QP is an opportunity for the Opposition Parties to ask questions of the Government.

A MoS or a PS may answer questions in the House of Commons in the Minister’s absence. A designated Minister will also answer questions for the PM when he is absent. Who answers may also depend on the subject of the question. Both federal and provincial governments have a daily Question Period when their respective House is in session.

Addressing the Parliamentarian

A Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary to a Minister should be addressed as Mr./Mrs./Ms. unless they instruct you differently.

A Senator should be addressed as Senator (name of the Senator) or Mr./Mrs./Ms. unless they instruct you differently.

A Cabinet Minister or Minister of State is addressed as ‘Minister’ or Mr./Mrs./Ms.

The Prime Minister is addressed as ‘Prime Minister’ or ‘Sir.’

Please view the Parliament of Canada link for further information.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Default.aspx>

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGEMENT

How to build relationships with Parliamentarians and become their trusted go-to expert

Do your homework before your initial meeting

To build rapport and establish common ground familiarize yourself with the background of the individual you are meeting. Knowing his or her education, professional experience, personal information and special interests will be valuable information, particularly if you have similar interests or experience. It just may be the part of your meeting that opens the door further for you. This information can easily be found on their website.

Define the objective of the meeting

This will help you (and your colleagues if you are part of a delegation) in the delivery of your key messages to the Parliamentarian and his/her staff.

Respect the time of Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians have very busy schedules in their ridings and in Ottawa when Parliament is in session.

When your meeting is in Ottawa, it is important to arrive at the Parliament building at least 10 minutes before it begins as you have to go through a very tight security system similar to airports around the world.

Be on time for meetings but do not arrive too early as some offices on Parliament Hill have no waiting space for stakeholders and guests.

If your meeting is in their Parliament Hill office the office of the Parliamentarian may have scheduled a 20 or 30 minute meeting, but keep in mind that parliamentary schedules are fluid and things can quickly change if an urgent issue arises in Parliament.

For example, you could arrive for a meeting to find that Parliamentarians are being called to the House of Commons or the Senate for a vote on key Government legislation. Thus, you may have to conduct your meeting while walking with the Parliamentarian; he/she may ultimately promise a makeup meeting. In this situation your elevator pitch is important (see other fact sheet for details).

If you meet with your parliamentarian in their constituency you will find that they are much more relaxed when they are away from the pressures and demands of Ottawa and interruptions of this type are much less likely to happen.

Wherever you meet, it is important that you do not take up too much of a Parliamentarian or their staff's time. Be known as the person who keeps to the meeting time and contributes to the issue. This will ensure that you get future meetings on the issue at hand (as well as other issues).

Do not fill the entire time talking. If you only have 20 minutes – do not speak for 19 trying to make your point. What will you have learned? What insight into decision-making have you gained? Always allow time for discussion and ideally get the parliamentarian or staff person talking FIRST in order to understand how to tailor your own remarks.

Bring your own camera and ask for a photo with the MP. When you get there look around for a good backdrop for your photo. Is there a flag in the room or a bookshelf that would give a nice backdrop?

Keep in touch to be seen as an expert in your field

Parliamentarians often meet between one and five organizations on a daily basis. To ensure your meeting stands out a thank you note for the meeting, preferably handwritten, and include a summary of the meeting, reiterating expectations “I look forward to your statement in the House” or “Thank you for bringing this matter to National Caucus” . Parliamentarians and their staff will appreciate the thank you and the polite reminder.

If you took a photo you can include a copy. If it is framed it will be put up on their wall, especially if it is sent to the constituency. You can also include the photo file in an additional email you send. Always identify the people in the picture. If they have the electronic file they, and you, can post it on your respective websites and include it in a newsletter. Mail sent to the House of Commons office does not require stamps, but it may be worth the postage to send it to the office where the meeting occurred.

Parliamentary email addresses can receive 100-1,000 daily, and emails can be overlooked. If you send an email, don't hesitate to call and say “I'm sending you an email about...” or follow up to ensure they received it. “I sent you an email about...on Tuesday at 2:15. I'm calling to ensure it got through.”

Do not hesitate to send periodic updates to the Parliamentarian whenever you have new, relevant information. If you write an article, have a blog or if you have an opinion about something relevant to the Parliamentarian you should take the time to send a copy to his/her office.

You can also send them copies of what others have written about the subject. Just do not send too much, too often. Their offices are inundated with electronic and regular mail.

Attend his/her fundraisers or events where they are the guest speaker or may be in attendance. Be sure to connect using social media tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. The goal is to be thought of as ‘the’ authoritative and trusted resource.

Be known

It is key to be seen as ‘always’ on Parliament Hill or at an event in the riding.

Do not hesitate to ask for periodic meetings at their office if you have new and relevant information.

The staffers of Parliamentarians are the gatekeepers of their time. It is imperative to develop a good working relationship with them to move your issues through Parliament or the Government. You want to be on a first name, friendly basis with the scheduler.

Be honest

If you do not know the answer to a question that is posed in a meeting say so; you can look into it afterwards and it will be an opportunity for you to reconnect in person, by email or phone.

GETTING THE MEETING YOU WANT

Get that desired appointment with Parliamentarians or government officials

The best time to make the call

You must call during business hours, which in most political offices is between 9am to 5pm. A number of offices are open at 8am. Also, you may find staff at their desk after 5pm because it is generally quieter to work during that time. You should not be surprised (or fooled) if the Parliamentarian answers the phone himself/herself in the evening. When Parliament is not in session (June to September and December/January) staffers have more flexibility with their time but may also be on holidays.

Who to speak to

As a general rule, you want to speak to the scheduler to set up an appointment. If the scheduler is away from the office, find out when he/she will return and call back. Over time, you will develop relationships with staffers in various offices on Parliament Hill.

Leaving a message

You should not hesitate to leave a message on the Parliamentarian's answering machine. It is important to find the balance between being a nuisance and being persistent. Wait a day for staffers to return your telephone call. Always be patient and understanding as it often takes time to get an appointment. View this as an opportunity to build a relationship. It will be more difficult for you to get the meeting you want if you start your relationship on the wrong footing.

Do not hesitate

Tell the scheduler the reason for your meeting as she/he will be presenting a binder full of requests to the Parliamentarian. Always have an email prepared in advance and send it during or immediately following the telephone call. Sending background information along with the request is beneficial.

Meeting length

While you may be scheduled for a 30 minute meeting, plan for 20 minutes as meeting times are very fluid for Parliamentarians. Often, last minute committee meetings and votes in the Chambers of Parliament frequently dominate their schedules.

Timing

Timing is important. If you want a meeting following a parliamentary break, try not to request it just before or during the break. When Parliamentarians are out of Ottawa, their Parliament Hill scheduler is unlikely to get a confirmation. Furthermore, the Parliamentarian will not be in a position to review the scheduling request book until much later in the week following their return to Ottawa.

Who to meet with

Stakeholders usually prefer meeting the Minister or the Parliamentarian. If the Minister is unavailable accept a meeting with their senior staff i.e. a director of policy or a senior policy advisor. Political staffers are responsible for briefing the Minister on ongoing issues affecting his/her portfolio. This initial meeting should open the door for a future meeting with the Minister.

How to get an appointment with government officials

Government Officials hold the corporate memory of departmental files. It is important to remember that they are responsible for writing the briefing notes on departmental issues for the Minister and his/her staff; issues that may impact your company/association/organization. They will often meet with stakeholders in advance or after a ministerial meeting and regularly take part in meetings with the ministerial staff (at their request). They are generally available from 7 am to 6 pm as they are encouraged to have staggered hours.

When speaking with officials, clearly state the purpose of your meeting in order to identify the appropriate departmental official to deal with the issue you are bringing forward. Furthermore, if you have met with the office of the Minister (prior to meeting with government officials, and they have recommended your meeting, request that the ministerial staffer send a note to the official on your behalf. This will be very helpful when you call as they will know the office of the Minister has made the recommendation and will make time for you.

If you are meeting with a Deputy Minister, an Associate Deputy Minister or an Assistant Deputy Minister, please refer to the How to handle yourself in a meeting with a Parliamentarian fact sheet for preparation.

HOW TO HANDLE YOURSELF IN A MEETING WITH A PARLIAMENTARIAN

Parliamentarians often have several stakeholder meetings a day on a variety of subjects. To make your meeting memorable, leave behind a positive first impression by respecting their time. Arrive and depart on time as they frequently have back to back meetings. Present your information factually and persuasively. Do your homework by reading their biography and learn about their riding or ministry. Do not do all the talking; allow time for dialogue as well as a response from the Parliamentarian.

Define roles and responsibilities before entering the meeting

Before you have a meeting with a Parliamentarian it is important to determine who will be in your delegation. You may go in as the representative or as a member of the Board of Directors of an organization. If you are meeting with a Minister, one member of your delegation should be a senior executive. Regardless of whether you go into the meeting individually or with others there should be three parts to your message: Introduction, Information Exchange and The Ask.

Make sure you have business cards for the Minister/Parliamentarian and each of their staff. You can expect 1-2 staff members in a Parliamentarian's office and up to 4 in a Minister's office to be present in the meeting; including departmental officials.

The individual meeting

When you go into a meeting on your own you are representing your organization. The advantage is that you can deliver your messages and still have time left over for casual discussion. The disadvantage is that there is no one there to fill in an important fact you may have forgotten. By establishing your message in advance you know exactly what you want to impart and what your desired outcome is. If you saw something in the Parliamentarian's biography that intrigued you, or that is a shared passion, mention it.

The group meeting

The leader of the delegation should introduce himself/herself and the members of the delegation. This is a good time to mention that shared sky-diving passion.

The designated leader of your delegation should chair the meeting and provide an introduction. With the exception of the consultant, there should not be anyone in the meeting who does not have a role in your organization.

Each speaker should speak to their topic in 2 minutes or less. Due to space and time restrictions, we do not recommend more than 4 attendees at a meeting as you want to allow time for feedback and questions. Be very encouraged if you have good dialogue as this shows you have engaged them in your topic.

Availability may have changed since the meeting was scheduled

Meeting time is very fluid for Parliamentarians. For this reason always ask at the start of the meeting how much time they have and adjust accordingly. Respect their time so they will be more likely to agree to a future meeting.

Listen more than you talk and share the meeting time

Parliamentarians are constantly inundated with a wide variety of issues and you have between 90 to 120 seconds to get their attention. Make sure that your presentation is well thought out and said in your own words.

Be sure to apply a 50/50 speaking time rule for the duration of the meeting. You want to hear the Parliamentarian's perspective on the issue you have raised as well as that of his/her Party so make sure they have time to respond.

Avoid using a slide deck during the course of your presentation as you can often lose the attention of the Parliamentarian. If you must use one do not read from it. Show the slide and speak to the image.

Give examples

This is where your homework will come in handy. To inspire emotion use examples that will demonstrate the impact on the lives of those who live and work in his/her community.

Make sure you answer these basic questions

1. Who are you (and/or your company/association/organization)?
2. Why are you here?
3. What do you want?
4. How can they help you?
5. How can you help them or their constituents?

Ensure you leave on time

Unless it is clearly stated that they have time to continue the conversation, do not stay longer than your allotted time. Pay attention to cues given by the staff that your time is up. If they are trying to catch the eye of the Parliamentarian, close their note book, gather their papers and stand, or are loitering by the door, your time is up.

Thank the Parliamentarian for their time. Leave behind a clearly labelled information package.

MAKING AN ELEVATOR PITCH TO PARLIAMENTARIANS

Parliamentarians attend a great number of public functions and participate in numerous committee hearings when Parliament is in session. If you are spending some time in Ottawa, you may run into a Parliamentarian at a reception, a fundraising event or they may come to see you after you have made an appearance before a Parliamentary committee.

These meetings can even occur in the washroom or a cloakroom of a hotel or restaurant. In order to be prepared for this brief encounter you should have a line or two prepared summarizing your main points.

Remember

- You have about 60 seconds to get your point across to a Parliamentarian during the course of an unscheduled encounter.
 - Use this short amount of time to your advantage in order for him/her to remember you, your company/association/organization and the issue you have discussed.
 - What you say will have an impact on the follow-up he/she makes when he/she gets back to their work as a legislator.
1. Introduce yourself and your company's/association's/organization's name;
 2. Hand them your business card;
 3. Summarize the main points of your issue;
 4. If they have time say more. If not;
 5. Get their business card, and;
 6. Ask for a meeting, and;
 7. The name of the staffer person you should speak to in their office;
 8. Thank them for their time and the future meeting.

THE MEETING HAS TAKEN PLACE: NOW WHAT?

The tough part is over, or is it?

You have met with an elected official, what should you do to follow up?

Keeping in mind that the overall goal is to accomplish your set task as well as to be thought of as ‘the’ authoritative and trusted resource that they can turn to for counsel it is suggested that you do the following:

Thank You

Within a week you should send a thank you note by mail. An email does not have the same impact as Parliamentarians receive 100-1,000+ emails daily. It is important to include any additional information you may have discussed, may have forgotten or come across after the meeting took place.

Recommended parts of a thank you note:

1. Greet the recipient – Dear Minister / Mr or Ms/Mrs xxx, MP (PC, MP if a Minister)
2. Express your gratitude and elaborate
‘Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with us to discuss xxx.’
3. Compliment & look ahead
‘We very much appreciated the opportunity to present our views/concerns/proposed solutions and look forward to working with you and your office/department to firm up details / implement this program /change / further discussions / announce the details.’ If they promised further information or names of others to meet with this is the time to get that information.
4. Restate your gratitude
Again, thank you for your time and attention to this matter / xxx and I look forward to working with you to xxx.
5. Give your regards
Kind regards / Sincere gratitude / Sincerely,

Telephone

Once the thank you note has been sent, we encourage you to pick up the telephone and call the office of the Parliamentarian to say how much you appreciated meeting them and/or their staff. Also ask if there is anything you can do for them either in Ottawa or their riding.

You will need to get past the person who answers the phone and should ask to speak to the staff member who attended the meeting with the Minister/MP (you should have this information on the business card they gave you). From time to time you may find that this person is no longer in the office. If this happens and it is a Ministers office ask to speak with their replacement or the Minister/MP directly. They may call you back after hours so give a number that you know you will be at such as a cell phone number. If there wasn’t a staffer in the meeting (this sometimes happens with an MP) you should ask to speak with the MP directly or their Legislative or Executive Assistant as above.

Proposed dialogue

1. Identify yourself and specify the date of your meeting and topic ‘Hello, I am xxx with xxx and I met with you and/or xxx last xxx and I would like the opportunity to take a moment of their time to follow up. I won’t need more than 5 (or maximum 10) minutes of their time.’
2. Once you have them on the phone say ‘I want to thank you again for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with me/us from xxx. We really appreciated it. I am calling to follow up on xxx. How much time do you have or is there a better time for us to speak?’

As per #3 above, be sure to restate your expectations such as further meetings, referrals to other Ministers/MPs/Officials who would be influential and may be supportive, and/or being included in or hosting the announcement. ‘I will send you an email to confirm our conversation.’ Have one already written that you can amend if necessary and send while you are on the phone.

If you do additional meetings that they have recommended be sure to circle back to let them know the results such as “we met with the deputy minister and they are going to do xxx. Thank you for this recommendation. I hope we can work together on this.’ or ‘As per your recommendation we met with the Committee Chair and Vice-Chairs and received the following response. Perhaps we can now all work together to get this passed.’ Or ‘there may still be some work to do on this to persuade the other party, can we meet to discuss further tactics?’

3. Restate: ‘If there is anything that we can do for you at any time please don’t hesitate to reach out.’

Social Media

If you have not done so already, connect with the Parliamentarian using social media tools such as their Facebook page, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts and utilize these links. Retweet their postings that you agree with, copy them on your pertinent tweets or comments on LinkedIn and Facebook. You should comment only on select posts and share their and your information when it is timely and appropriate.

Update

It is also important to send periodic updates on your subject matter by email. Furthermore, if you author an article, if your company issues a relevant news release, or host newsworthy events, let the Parliamentarian and/or their staff know by sending a link or copy. If there are significant updates or you wish to bring in additional expertise you should consider a follow-up meeting.

Invite

If your company hosts internal or sponsor external events, you may want to invite the Parliamentarian to be a panelist or guest speaker. Or simply invite them to attend the event that you are hosting.

Due to rules set by the Ethics Commissioner as a result of the Accountability Act they may or may not be able to accept tickets to a gala or luncheon/dinner. There are no clear rules for acceptance at this time and they will most likely need to get back to you to indicate if they are permitted to accept a complimentary ticket. Travel and parliamentary schedules may also determine participation. Be sure to consult the parliamentary calendar (www.parl.gc.ca/housechamberbusiness/ChamberCalendar.aspx) to assist in determining if the member may be in or out of Ottawa and confirm this with their office(s) as appropriate. For example, if you want to do a lobby day in Ottawa it must be during a sitting week.

Attend / Be Present

Attend the Parliamentarian's fundraisers or events where they are the guest speaker or may be in attendance. For fundraisers this will require a personal donation (corporate donations are not permitted federally) not in excess of \$1500 cumulative per calendar year and can be given to any combination of riding association. For example, you can give \$500 each to a Conservative, NDP and Liberal riding association as long as you don't exceed \$1500. You can give \$1500 each to all or any registered National Party e.g. Conservative, NDP Liberal and/or the Green Party. In a leadership race you can give \$1500 cumulative to contenders for a registered national Party.

Do

- Be friendly and call back weekly (not daily) to make your request and be prepared to follow up with a detailed email. Sometimes the requests get lost in the volume and/or busyness; be prepared to resend the original email/invitation so they can see that date.
- Your subject line should give indicate your type of request such as 'meeting req/Assoc Fundraisers/6May2015' or 'followup/mtg/Assoc Fundraisers/6May2015' this will make it easier for them to search for.
- Suggest a meeting in the constituency office or in Ottawa. Ministers are often in different major Canadian cities and meetings can also take place there so ask.
- Believe the staff when they tell you there is no room in the schedule, be kind with your words and flexible with your time when you ask for an available opening. If they do this for you, you may want to bring the scheduler a small, perhaps edible, thank you gift to brighten their day.
- Remember: Always be polite and considerate of the staff; they can make or break your relationship. If you come across as rude or pushy, they can and most likely will, block your access.

In Summary:

1. Send a thank you note within a week;
2. Unless it is urgent to make your note stand out send it by mail;
3. Include any follow-up or additional information;
4. Pick up the telephone and call;
5. Connect using social media tools;
6. Send periodic updates on your subject matter by email;
7. Invite the Parliamentarian to speak at one of your internal or external events;
8. Attend fundraisers or events.