Components of a Strategic Advocacy Campaign

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The purpose of this document is to define important components for an advocacy campaign in an effort to establish a generic framework or checklist for future campaigns. The major steps involved in an advocacy campaign include:

1. **Identify an issue of significant importance and interest to the public and brand the issue**
   a. What is the **issue** and what is needed to address it?
   b. What will be the **benefits** to the public? What are the measures of success? What difference would the completion of this campaign make?
   c. Use the expertise of faculty, industry, and producers to **identify the gaps** in science, outreach and Extension for the issue. The thoroughness of the research is extremely important.
   d. What **level of funding** would be needed to complete the campaign that will address the issue? What types of activities might be supported?
   e. It is recommended that a large portion of the funds should be provided on a **competitive** basis in support of integrated activities
   f. Relate the campaign to the **issues of the day**, drought, food safety, energy, obesity, health, etc.
   g. **Brand** the campaign (name the issue) to easily communicate to a broad audience. (e.g., Living wage)
   h. Identify **expected outcomes,** impacts, and tangible benefits to be realized by the public

2. **Timeframe for the ask and buy-in from appropriate individuals, groups, and organizations**
   a. Who is the audience?
   b. **Who needs to be involved** and at what time and stage of the campaign? Communicate early on and involve appropriate people from various organizations in the discussion (e.g., USDA, NIFA, or other agencies). Develop a complete **list of players** (including their affiliation and contact information) before the start of campaign and preferably during early discussion period.
   c. Develop a detailed schedule (**timeframe**) of the steps to be completed for the campaign.
   d. What are some specific **milestones** regarding the schedule? Who is responsible for achieving them?

e. Identify people/organizations that may **not necessarily support the issue**. Work with them to collaborate or develop strategies to counter. Develop an inventory of coalition members.
f. Utilize **kglobal's expertise** in this effort to develop a broad and diverse cross-sector advocacy coalition that includes commodity groups, producers, industry, citizens, universities, NGOs, and politicians as appropriate

3. **Design a complete plan of action**
   a. Develop a **vision/goal/strategies** and actions for the campaign
   b. **Refine the timeframe** developed earlier for the campaign—who should be involved and who is responsible for various steps??
   c. Appoint a **steering committee** responsible for coordination that responds to questions, communicates with the interest groups, and provides news releases.

4. **Develop educational materials**
   a. Use background research and gaps identified to develop **fact sheets** that include easily-understandable messages targeted at specific audiences
   b. Focus on current advances, **the need, and expected outcomes**
   c. Make taking action **effortless** for those who are interested in helping
   d. Use **personal/real stories** to communicate the importance of the campaign
   e. Kglobal should be able to develop an **advocacy marketing strategy** that includes effective messaging, launching a media campaign, coordinating the process, and reaching out to elected officials.

5. **Create a mechanism to provide/receive feedback**

6. **Monitor progress and modify approach as needed**

BAA process for advancing new budget initiatives

Over the last several years, considerable effort has been put into two budget initiatives, Pest Management and Water Security. The concept of addressing issues of great importance as described in the Water Security Initiative has gained broad support of the BAA, and at least some traction at NIFA. Several valuable lessons have been learned through these processes including: the need to have a unified voice, the use of topical experts in developing white papers, and vetting whitepapers at various levels including ECOP, ESCOP, the BAC, and the Policy Board of Directors. A critically important point is to identify the outcomes and impacts enumerated in any proposal. There also is need for logistical support from the Executive Directors and at least two years of lead time to get an initiative "in the cue" for consideration, with every effort must be made to have federal partners engaged in the process. The complete process from idea to white paper completion and approval must be completed at least two years in advance of efforts to include in a budget request.

Steps:

Identification of the big problem

Vetting idea with Sections

Vetting idea with Cornerstone for feasibility

BAC charges workgroup

Directors identify workgroup members who agree to participate

Workgroup is created with the Section Chars serving as WG co-chairs

With the assistance of the EDs, and Section Chairs, WG develops a white paper through an iterative process

White paper containing necessary budget information endorsed by Sections Budget and Legislative Committees and the Sections

White paper is sent to the BAC for consideration/approval

With BAC endorsement, the white paper is sent to the Policy Board of Directors for approval.

Policy Board Chair communicates the white paper to all members of the BAA, the Director of NIFA and other appropriate agencies

Deans/Directors distribute white paper to their faculty

EDs and others work with kglobal and Cornerstone to develop messages that will resonate with targeted individuals/groups. EDs work with communications staff to develop aesthetically pleasing one-pagers

kglobal uses various means to communicate importance of the initiative to targeted individuals

White paper Development and Content:

WG uses logic model to develop white paper

Clearly identifies the issue or situation and importance to a broad base of stakeholders

Identifies the needs, goals and objectives

Specifies time frames for milestones

Identifies who will benefit

Identifies expected outcomes and impacts, and how will conditions will change