

ARTS ADVOCACY BEST PRACTICES WITH STAN ROSENBERG: How to Talk to Elected Officials



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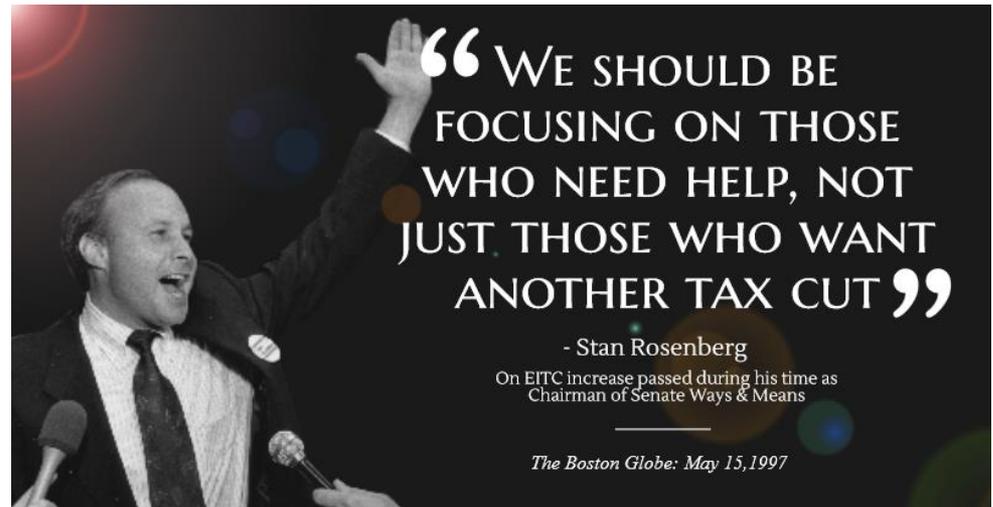
Moderator



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Speaker: Senate President Stan Rosenberg



Recipient of the 2010 Public Leadership in the Arts Award



How and Why Do We Advocate

- Shrinking federal, state and local resources.
- The Arts must promote itself. If we don't, who will?
- Artists and Arts Organizations must promote themselves. Educate others what is it about.
- The arts, in general, will be locked out of government funding if it does not show economic and social benefits.

Arts
Extension
Service



Fundamentals of Arts Management

Sixth Edition | Arts Extension Service
University of Massachusetts Amherst



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Key Principles of Cultural Advocacy

- Advocacy must be part of your daily mission.
- Being successful depends on a unified message, purpose and strategy.
- Seek to establish coalitions
- Politics is fluid; change is constant. Be ready for it!
- Establish a strategy and a plan.
- Get to know your elected officials.

Key Principles of Cultural Advocacy

- Understand how your activities contribute to the greater good.
- Treat your allies and opponents with friendly respect.
- Work hard for your political friends.
- Be honest.
- Politicians respond to voters. Target voters for your advocacy.
- Strive for clarity and brevity in all your communications.

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Goals and Wishes

➤ What do we need?

- The first step in determining an advocacy strategy is setting your goals and priorities.
- You should discuss all kinds of goals ranging practical and short term to wishful and long term.
- List as many of your ideas as possible.

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Organizing Priorities

➤ What can we do?

- Politics has been called the art of the possible—some of what we wish may never happen or can only happen with steps leading us there.
- Using a scale of 1-11 take each of your goals and wishes and rank them in three categories:
 - importance,
 - urgency
 - and feasibility.

Organizing Priorities— Chart Example

Goal / Wish	Importance	Urgency	Feasibility

Advocacy Inventory (Part 1)

- A survey of the assets and resources we already have.

Internal Resources

- Board members
- Staff experience
- Knowledge of the community
- Political experience or lack of experience
- Size of contact data base

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Advocacy Inventory (Part 2)

- A survey of the assets and resources we already have.

External Resources

- Identify groups, organizations, businesses and people who benefit directly or indirectly from your cultural organization's work.
- This is a list of supporters and potential supporters.
- Think beyond donors and subscribers—who benefits from vendor contracts, etc.

Who Makes the Decision?

- Now that you have set your priorities, you need to determine who makes the decision and how do they make that decision.

Who influences the decision?

- This list will include elected officials but also staff, voters, community groups and opinion leaders.
- For each identified group or individual rate them in one of three categories: Ally / Supporter, Neutral, Opposed / Apathetic.

Example—Who Makes the Decision?

Group	Ally / Supporter	Neutral	Opposed

Advocacy Continuum

- The following is an advocacy continuum which outlines a range of activities defined by the level of your commitment.
- Starting from the top are activities that are relatively easy, inexpensive, and straightforward. As you progress down the list, the activities require greater commitment of time, dedication, and resources.
- As you gain advocacy experience, you and your colleagues will become skilled at all the tasks outlined here. However, if you feel like a newcomer to advocacy, try the activities at the top of the chart.
- Dip your toe in here and you will soon be swimming with all the political fish (and the sharks as well.)

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Advocacy Continuum, Cont'd

Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletters, online briefs, etc.• Telling your story to the public without links to an agenda
Workshops/Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocacy discussion and training• Enabling people through training
Speakers Programs/Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informing key audiences about your advocacy• Topics are not controversial
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducting research to measure community value, including economic impact, etc.• Leads to positioning papers

Advocacy Continuum (Cont'd)

Position Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using the research to guide policy positions as outlined in position papers• Communicating the research to the public
Advocacy Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing a community of advocates local and statewide• Developing shared agenda and common message
Agenda Setting/Public Policy	Setting an advocacy agenda targeted to national, state or local government

Advocacy Continuum (Cont'd)

Awards to Politicians, Business Leaders & Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognizing past support and effort• Developing champions for your cause
Accountability Organizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting candidates to state their opinions, commit to action or support• Publish the information about candidates/officials without offering support
Endorsing Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publicly endorsing one candidate over another based on voting records or opinion surveys• (Cannot be done by a non-profit organization)• Endorsing candidates is risky—your candidate may lose and your endorsement may antagonize other candidates and their supporters



Advocacy Continuum (Cont'd)

Campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributing personal money to a candidate's campaign• Volunteering to work in the campaign.• (Cannot be done by a non-profit organization)
Lobbying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hiring a lobbyist• Registering as a citizen lobbyist• Working at the statehouse to affect legislation/legislators
First Amendment Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts and culture often sit on the fault lines of intense societal disagreements. Taking sides carries the risk of earning enmity. Not taking sides carries the risk of losing your self-respect• Responding to public attacks on the arts based on misinformation, bias or preference

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ Scenario:

- The cultural community has identified a growing crisis of inadequate cultural facilities due to age and deferred maintenance.
- The average age of the state's cultural facilities is 93 years.
- Cultural organizations need substantial financial support to address issues of building code compliance, fire safety, handicapped accessibility, energy efficiency, and improvements and expansions.
- This campaign plan is designed to achieve the filing of a bill in the state legislature to provide cultural facilities funding.

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Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ JANUARY

- Develop a legislative advocacy strategy based upon committee appointments in the state's House of Representatives and Senate. Identify a list of targeted legislators who chair key committees or occupy positions of leadership.
- Develop a fundraising strategy for private-sector matching requirement. Development of the Steering Committee works in tandem with this fundraising strategy.
- Take first steps to form an Advisory Committee of cultural leaders from organizations throughout the state. We will recruit board leaders from cultural organizations with a goal of two organizations per targeted legislator and two board members from each organization.
- Meet with Historic Preservation leadership.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ January - March

- Meetings with potential fundraisers.
- Identify key business leader to be co-chair of the campaign.
- Telephone survey of cultural organizations with facilities, to document needs and develop a database of maintenance issues for cultural institutions in the targeted legislative districts.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ January - February

- Invite business leaders as potential steering committee members to the February meeting.
- Develop research on public support for the preservation of cultural and historic buildings through public funding.
- Schedule series of speeches for Chambers of Commerce, January—September.
- Explore partnership with tourism and lodging industries.
- Recruit university or foundation to donate or commission a public opinion poll

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ March – April

- Continue to grow the steering committee of business and cultural leaders. Continue to work on raising private-sector match.
- Collect documentary photos through site visits to cultural facilities as identified in the telephone survey. Photos will be used in collateral material and in the rally planned for the Statehouse.
- Obtain the support of key municipal leaders including the mayors of targeted municipalities.
- Identify mayors to participate in a Mayors' Forum to be held in September.



Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ March – April (Cont'd)

- Develop collateral material, including list of examples of cultural institutions in need of support. Possibly develop a Top 10 list of threatened organizations.
- Develop a database of potential supporters in each targeted legislative district, including Board members of each institution, major suppliers, volunteers, and employees. This can be done with the assistance of the Advisory Committee.
- Schedule meetings with industry leaders such as a high-tech council, biotech council, and industry associations.
- Private discussion with editorial writer for state's largest newspaper.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ May

- Continue to recruit the Steering Committee of business and cultural leaders. Continue to work on private-sector match.
- University collects polling information.
- Schedule 40 legislative site visits in targeted districts.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ June - August

- Continue to grow the Steering Committee. Continue to work on private-sector match.
- Site visits with local representatives and state senators in the targeted legislative districts.
- Local press coverage for each visit.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ September

- Continue to grow the Steering Committee. Continue to work on private-sector match.
- Meet with newspaper editorial board.
- Mayors' Forum with press conference.
- Delivery of mayors' letter of support at press conference.
- Generate press coverage in media.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ October

- Meetings with editorial boards of newspapers serving in targeted legislative districts.
- State House event with coalition advocates, including large-size photos. Advocates meet with representatives and senators.
- Announcement of fundraising goal.
- Recognition of donors.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ October (Cont'd)

- Obtain sponsors and cosponsors of the legislation.
- Schedule meetings with targeted legislators with key cultural leaders from their districts to ask them to cosponsor the legislation.
- Filing of the bill.
- The following campaign steps will be coordinated with the legislative process:
- Organize key supporters to testify at House and Senate Committee hearings.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ October (Cont'd)

Implement grassroots advocacy strategy as follows:

- Collect letters of support addressed to legislators from the trustees and directors of nonprofit cultural organizations.
 - Letters should be on the business, professional, or personal stationery of the individual trustee.
 - These letters will be collected at the campaign headquarters to be delivered by hand at the right political moment.
- Begin email campaign through advocacy group's website using advocacy software.
 - Target: 1,000 emails over two months.

Sample Statewide Campaign Strategy and Timeline

➤ October (Cont'd)

- Coordinate a letters-to-the-editor campaign in support of the bill.
- Host a series of political fundraisers in private homes for the bill's legislative sponsors and leaders.
- Organize a series of meetings with business leaders, cultural supporters, and key legislators.
- Organize an advocacy rally at the State House.
- After the bill passes each chamber, send a thank-you note to all the legislators who supported the bill, especially those in leadership positions.
- Celebrate!



Questions?





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Thank you!



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