

The Democracy Center - Citizen Action Series

Excerpts from *The Democracy Owners Manual*
(To preview or purchase the book visit www.democracyctr.org)

Media Advocacy

Media advocacy, like all aspects of public advocacy, must be strategic. You need to have a clear sense of your objectives, of who you need to reach and move, and a plausible plan for how to do that.

What Are You Trying To Accomplish?

Be clear about who your audience is for your media work and what you are trying to achieve – public awareness, changing votes, pressuring a lawmaker, promoting your organization. The way you use the media will be different for each one.

Designing Your Message

All media work is ultimately about communicating a message, hopefully an effective one. First, have a message that genuinely appeals to your audience, not just yourselves. Then “frame” that message in a way that puts your position in the best light and your opponents’ in the worst. Use symbols to make your message powerful – people, places and images that have public meaning. Finally, communicate your message in short “sound bites” that reporters can use.

Make Your Story Newsworthy

Your story is in competition with dozens of others happening on the same day. You can make your story more attractive to the media if you focus on making it new, making it human, creating a conflict, linking it to something else big that is already in the news – or even better, all four at once. You also help yourself by building solid relationships with reporters.

Media Materials - The Tools of the Trade

Effective media advocacy uses a specific set of tools and materials: media lists for your area and issue; news advisories to let the press know of an upcoming event; news releases which write the story your way and include all the facts; and other background information, whatever reporters will need to write the story.

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