

Advocacy Tips

Use this guide to improve your success when speaking to members of congress, businesses, or your community.

Find Common Ground

- Do research on your target audience (and their staff or employees)
 - Is their platform or business centered around children in any way?
 - Do they themselves have children, coach or sponsor sports teams or participate in community events?
 - Is there a public connection to cancer in general? How about Pediatric Cancer?
This is a fantastic way to quickly gain an open ear to listen to your cause.
- Prepare your words before any meeting, practice and ensure that what you say is concise, understandable and to the point (Avoid Rambling and getting off track.)
 - Be sure to research the info you plan to talk about, know your facts and be ready to answer questions.
 - Do not be afraid to say “I’ll get back to you” if there is something you are unclear on, it is better to follow-up later that day than to pass along bad information.
 - Nobody has all the information, and this will be common, just be sure to write down the questions and follow-up as soon as possible.
 - Know the main statistics, the ones that grab the most attention and be strong and confident when sharing those.
 - Stay on topic!
 - This can be difficult but try your best to remain on the current topic and not to venture into others too soon. You want your listeners to be engaged and fully understanding your points before moving on to something else.

Know your Audience

- Understand the Businesses main market and purpose, but remember that the core of everything is kids, as the future of this country, these businesses exist based on the hope of longevity and success because of future workers and owners of their companies.
- Politicians have an agenda and base to answer to, if their main platform does not involve kids or healthcare then you are going to have to make it personal. Use a personal connection to your cause as your main source of information. Do not be afraid to share stories and names of your inspiration for being there.
- Use precise but not an overwhelming number of facts, just enough to draw them in and keep their attention.
 - Keeping their attention is key, stay on task, do not lose focus, and be confident in what you are saying.

Read the Room

- Be sure to maintain eye contact with those around you to ensure they are engaged in the conversation.
- Include everyone in the room, remember that while the majority may not be decision makers, they will have input on the support you receive.
 - THERE ARE NO UNIMPORTANT PEOPLE WHEN IT COMES TO ADVOCATING!
- Bring materials with you to hand out and leave behind, this will ensure your name is constant on their mind when you follow-up.
 - Items may include statistic sheets, flyers for events, brochures about your business, business cards, pictures with causes, etc.
 - Be respectful and learn everyone's names, greet them on the way in and out, remember, this is your first point of contact, and how you interact with them will

directly influence how their bosses interact with you during and after the meeting.

Stay in Touch

- This is the point where most advocacy can fall short, after meetings, zoom calls or initial contact, there is no follow-up.
 - This shows a lack of interest in forward movement for your cause. It also shows the person you met with that you are forgettable.
 - Remember that while you are the current focus of the meeting, they have an entire day to move on and focus on other things, forgetting about the meeting with you. This is the result of day-to-day business operations and while it may not be personal, it can sure feel that way.
 - Your commitment does not end when you walk out the door, it is just beginning.
 - You must maintain contact, through email, phone, or other means to ensure your cause stays fresh in their minds.
 - Follow their social media and thank them publicly for taking the time to meet with you, this will engage other followers and show them what their representatives or business owners genuinely care about.
 - Collect business cards for each person in the room and any that are available, if for some reason no one is there to speak to, be sure to leave your information and take theirs, or ask to set up a time to meet with the decision maker or lawmaker.
 - This will leave the impression that you are serious about your cause and want the opportunity to speak about it.

Leave an impression

- Shake Hands

- Thank them for their time and the opportunity to share your mission or cause
- Take pictures and ask if its ok to share them with your community
- Post about the positive interaction on social media and be sure to tag everyone involved
- Let them know you will be following up and would love to set up another meeting or frequent meetings to track the progress of your discussions.

In conclusion, this is not an exhaustive list of tips, but is a solid foundation to build your advocacy career into your own drive and mission for change.