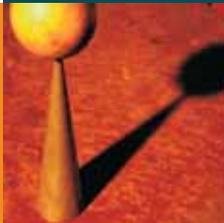# SAGAC
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

2005
Trendsin
Political
Communications

SOLUTIONS

GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATIONS
POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS
POLITICAL GIVING

CORPORATIONS | ASSOCIATIONS

GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATIONS

Key Contact Programs

38%

have a "Key Contact" program whereby employees/members meet or communicate with Members of Congress regularly.

Rank of methods for communicating with Key Contacts:

1. Internet/Email   (88%)
2. Telephone   (60%)
3. Grassroots/Fieldwork   (44%)
4. Direct Mail   (36%)
5. Business Meetings   (32%)
6. Other   (8%)

51%

educate members/employees on how to effectively communicate with Congress by providing training seminars or educational guides.

Call-to-action Programs

71%

have a "Call-to-action" program whereby employees/members are urged to communicate with members of Congress regarding priority issues.

10%

is the average response rate to calls-to-action by employees/members.

4%

hold seminars or provide educational guides to train employees/members on how to run for public office.

Rank of "Call-to-action" methods:

1. Internet/Email   (98%)
2. Telephone   (37%)
3. Grassroots/Fieldwork   (26%)
4. Direct Mail   (19%)
5. Business Meetings   (13%)
6. Fax   (4%)

Methods for measuring success of program activities:

1. Member/employee response rates
2. Tracking communication activities
3. Congressional activities and legislative outcomes
4. Congressional staff feedback to lobbyists

" We focus less on the quantity and more on the effectiveness of the communications "

Rank of methods for communicating legislative issues to Congress:

(Most-to-least effective)

1. DC and In-district Meetings
2. Grassroots/Fieldwork
3. Internet/Email
4. Television and Print Advertising
5. Radio Advertising and Direct Mail
6. Patch-through calls

" Our biggest obstacle is reaching our members and conveying our message in a way that excites them to take action "

Obstacles to implementing legislative and grassroots communications:

1. Lack of internal resources: staffing, time, money/budget, and board support
2. Perceived apathy and time constraints of members/employees
3. Communicating with dispersed and remote members/employees
4. Motivating and recruiting politically active members/employees
5. Maintaining current contact information of members

POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

19%

engage in partisan communication activities encouraging members/employees to
"vote for" or "vote against" specific congressional candidates.

Rank of partisan communication activities to employees/members:

1. Internet/Email   (64%)
2. Direct Mail   (57%)
3. Voter Registration   (50%)
4. Grassroots/Field work   (43%)
5. Early Voting/Absentee Balloting   (43%)
6. Get-out-the-vote   (36%)
7. Telemarketing   (7%)
8. Research   (7%)
9. Advertising   (7%)

Methods for measuring success of partisan communication activities:

1. Election results
2. Internal Intranet tracking system
3. Responses from members/employees

Obstacles to implementing partisan communication:

1. Fear of being too partisan can bring negative perceptions
2. Lack of resources: time, human resources, and finances
3. Lack of interest or desire on behalf of the organization
4. FEC laws

> " We generally use a soft approach, asking our members to consider the record of the candidate on our issues when casting their vote "

> " The attainment of the legislative objective is the final measurement of success "

42%

engage in issue advocacy activities targeting the general public on issues.

Rank of Issue advocacy activities:

1. Internet/Email   (73%)
2. Print Advertising   (69%)
3. Grassroots/Fieldwork   (46%)
4. Direct Mail   (42%)
5. Television Advertising   (42%)
6. Radio Advertising   (38%)
7. Media   (21%)
8. Patch-through calls   (15%)

Methods for measuring success of issue advocacy activities:

1. Gauging how the candidate fared in the targeted area
2. Media coverage and earned media gained
3. Number of hits to the website, calls and letters generated
4. Legislative progress and success

Obstacles to implementing issue advocacy activities:

1. Requirement of resources: budget, time, human resources and support
2. Lack of grassroots base
3. FEC guidelines
4. Updating key contact information

POLITICAL GIVING

73%
contribute to national party committees
(i.e. DNC, RNC, DSCC, NRCC, etc.)

Reasons for contributing to party committees:

1. Gain access and visibility to Congress
2. Elect candidates who support legislative agenda
3. Show bi-partisan support
4. Asked by members of Congress

It increases access and visibility allowing us to deliver a broader message

Reasons for not contributing to party committees:

1. Support given only to individual candidates
2. Corporate contributions are prohibited
3. Lack of perceived and/or direct benefits
4. PAC Board policy

79%
contribute to Leadership PACs

Reasons for contributing to leadership PACs:

1. Help candidates who support the legislative agenda
2. Gain access to party leaders
3. Asked by members of Congress
4. Feel it is a necessary part of the political process

For champions of our issues, it provides another method of financial support to the candidates

21%
contribute to presidential campaigns, citing "access" and "participating in inaugural activities" as reasons.

Reasons cited for not contributing to presidential campaigns:

1. Keep bi-partisan approach
2. Fear of segmenting employees/members and their involvement in the PAC
3. PAC is too small to make a significant contribution
4. More effective to support state/local campaigns and legislative issues
5. Presidential race is perceived to not profoundly affect organizations

The presidential candidate can rarely be directly connected to our corporate issues

527 contributions are made for business-specific issues

14%
contribute to 527 organizations/coalitions

Reasons for not making 527 contributions:

1. Lack of control over communications
2. Legal compliance and related issues
3. PAC support is geared toward candidates
4. 527 issues are not relevant to organization's issues or goals
5. Against by-laws and policies to contribute

It is more effective for us to spend our funds directly on the candidates

50%
anticipate that 527 giving will increase over the next four years.
25% believe that 527 giving will remain the same.

A qualitative survey of the top business political action committees (51% association/49% corporate) as identified by the Federal Election Commission, June 2005 (margin of error +/- 7.6%).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Trey Richardson is principal of Sagac Public Affairs, a national firm providing finance, consulting and communications solutions for America's leading business political action committees.

Ann McCord is principal of McCord & Company, a national public affairs firm specializing in the design and implementation of grassroots and advocacy programs for corporations, associations, and political organizations.

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