

The Craft of Lobbying: A practitioners View

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Presentation Agenda

- Introduction to modern-day profession of lobbying
- Definitions
- EU and US approaches to lobbying
- The fundamental principles
- Lobbying as a career
- Discussion

To lobby is legitimate!

- Lobbying is a part of democratic process where an interest group can petition the government!
- Members of parliament expect to be provided information from constituencies.
- Legislators need information from “the field” to understand the needs, problems and issues

No more mystery.

- Institutions are more open to public scrutiny
- Many different groups lobby – fierce competition
- Increase in the numbers of people who lobby
(US – 30.000, EU – 15.000)
- Technology made information accessible
- Instantaneous electronic access and broadcast of political information

Lobbying industry becoming regulated

- More and more lobbying regulation defining the rules
- Professional societies that set codes of conduct and defend the integrity
- CEE first cases of regulation lobbying conduct of interest representation

"Lobbying is about understanding relevant machinery of decision-making and then influencing the process."

"Lobby groups want to know how the system really works and not how it is supposed to work."

Rinus van Schendelen , Machiavelli in Brussels

"The singular prerequisite to a lobbyist's success and effectiveness is understanding the decision-maker."

"Loobying is the political management of information."

Bruce C. Wolpe, Lobbying Congress

How to influence and how to do it more effectively

Discipline 1.

People who know **political science**, the mother of the study of influence.

Discipline 2.

Management science – how to get things done as desired

Other expertise and technical knowledge

EU vs. US approaches

- Brussels vs. Washington
- Similar techniques, but differences in style and substance
- Language and national cultures
- EU – traditional, consensus-based approach to EU policy-making and lobbying
- US – highly professionalised and more aggressive style
- Political institutions in Brussels and Washington are different animals – require different approach

In terms of policy

- To be successful, lobbyists need to adjust to political system in which they operate
- Let's take a look at institutional and political framework in Brussels and Washington...

- The US is a nation state with a federal structure while the EU is a collection of nation states with only partial limitations to sovereignty.
- Institutional setting in DC stable for decades, the EU is in constant flux over whether to expand or even roll back Brussels's powers.

- American has a long tradition of lobbying: practice is largely accepted, wide variety of interest groups – NGOs and citizen's groups – fight for the attention of politicians
- Europeans are more sceptical towards lobbying as a legitimate part of the political process
- Current estimations point to a total of 30.000 lobbyists in Washington. About half this number can be identified in Brussels.

Some issues

- Insufficient staffing in the Commission (research says Commission administration is only 2% the size of the US federal gov and is even smaller than the local gov of the city of Rotterdam).
- The total EU budget is about the same as that of Belgium

- As a consequence, the Commission welcomes outside input at the drafting stage of EU policy-making, giving consulted interest groups privileged access at the defining moment in the legislative process
- One of the first main differences: public funding

- Only in rare circumstances does the US gov fund non-profit organisations.
- The opposite is true in the EU where the EC has tried to balance corporate lobbying by supporting and even setting up non-profit organisations

Representation system

- Constituencies are clearly less influential than in the US.
- Lobbying tactics in DC are heavily defined along issues which can influence re-election.
- Brussels tactics will seek to build a broader consensus to influence a wide variety of politicians on a particular outcome.

Money

- In the US, corporations routinely support politicians (re-election campaigns) through Political Action Committees (PACs).
- Such practices are not recognized or regulated in the EU and are generally seen as unethical.
- In Europe, money has tendency to flow from the public sector to civil society in the form of state aid, grants, subsidies and contracts.

Transparency

- The Lobbying Disclosure Act – requires list of clients, the issues they deal with and the money they get to perform these tasks.
- EC has developed minimal standards on consultations with interest groups (Communication published in 2002)
- New Transparency Initiative
- Voluntary Code of Conduct (Society of European Affairs Professionals – SEAP)

Media Influence

- Fourth power status in the US
- Important element in every professional public affairs campaign

Wider cultural context

- Language – crucial differentiating factor
- 20 different languages in Brussels
- English lingua franca in Brussels, still MEPs value being approached in their native language

- US the most highly professionalised place in the world for lobbying
- But as the single market develops and the EU gains more powers, the gap with Brussels will gradually close

The fundamental principles: a regimen that guides a lobbyist

- Know at the outset what you want
- Know the players – interpersonal relations
- Know the institutions, committees
- Understand the public policy rationale
- Prepare materials – clarity and concision
- Anticipate the opposition
- Observe basic courtesies

Lobbying as a career

- Consultants
- Part of an agency or a firm
- Large corporation
- Political group or party
- NGO or international organisation
- Union
- Government

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THANK YOU.