

THE LOBBY CHANNEL

August, 2007

STAN LONG, EDITOR

EVERYBODY LOBBIES -

THE LOBBYIST'S **NEWS LETTER**

ETHICAL LOBBYING IS EFFECTIVE LOBBYING

**This NEWS LETTER IS INTENDED TO BE OF DIRECT HELP TO THOSE
WHO SEE
A LOBBYING CAREER IN THEIR FUTURE.**

This will benefit those who have studied the many texts and published material that has been available, including Everybody Lobbies. You have read many useful articles and written opinions on the subject, almost all of which relate to lobbying. We have sent all types of material which could prove useful to you in your effort to learn about lobbying.

The question is “ have you done your homework?”

If so, this series is for you. It hopes to make it a little easier for you to launch a successful lobbying career. This first offering will cover some, but not all, of the issues and decisions you must make prior to publicly offering your services as a competent and well oriented lobbyist. Choosing well thought out decisions now will save you many hardships and difficulties later on.

Future bulletins will stress ethics and efficiency but the foundations upon which you establish your career are paramount to success.

We thought it best to offer a hypothetical case of how a lobbyist handles his/her first client. Consider yourself the “**lobbyist**” and your first, imaginary client we’ll call “**Mr. G.**”

Mr. G. is a successful farmer who owns a large farm in the middle west. His farming operations have come under the heavy hand of

bureaucracy all too often and he feels that he has been the victim of demands of the law which are unfair and injurious to his business. He wants relief now. He will be asking for help from whomever he retains to represent his grievances with the appropriate Washington authorities.

You were called in to be interviewed. **Since you are** the first lobbyist he has considered hiring; he is the first client you will represent. So you both are starting on an even basis - yes, or no?

Is there a difference? Well, yes. **Since he will be** your first client you have to convince him that you can adequately represent his views and succeed, perhaps where others may have failed.

Mr. G knows the farming industry well. How well do you know it? As a newly minted lobbyist you've had no active experience in farming. In fact the closest you have come to farming could be in buying some produce at a deli in New York city.

So, as your resume reveals, and as Mr. G has probably noticed, **he** must be convinced that **you** are a fast, competent learner and an articulate speaker who can represent his interest successfully. Now we will assume that your interview went well and Mr. G is going to take a chance on a fledgling lobbyist. CONGRATULATIONS.

What Are Some Of The First Things You Must Address?

Understanding each other at the start is absolutely necessary. You must understand what Mr. G expects of you.

His expectations must be reasonable and hopefully attainable. Miracles are not in the equation. Don't promise or lead him to believe that it will be a cinch or that you can perform miracles. That only leads to disappointment. Your client will respect you more if you level with him.

You will agree to do your very best to represent him in a genuine effort to bring about a full victory. If a half victory is the best that can be realistically achieved, it's probably better than no progress at all. If your success goes all the way, as you hope it will, then it will look great in your lobbying resume.

What will be your employment status since Mr. G. has decided to retain you? Will you be acting as a

contract lobbyist

company lobbyist

single Issue lobbyist

association lobbyist

Lets say you be a single issue lobbyist for now. He has a problem. He wants the necessary lobbying help to solve that problem. You agree to use every tool and connection you can make to make him glad he chose you. O.K. we'll get into that later but right now lets discuss fees --don't you think that's important?

The con-joining consideration to the above is the Fee arrangement. Lets assume that Mr. G is impressed and agrees to discuss the above on the single issue category.

You should analyze how much time and traveling is involved and if on a single case, quote a fair price for your services. Just a word of caution. **NEVER, never**, under estimate your fees on the basis that you want to do your client a favor or you are afraid you might not be hired. I learned this the hard way. Some time I'd like to share that with you.

Your time and expertise are valued commodities and are generally appreciated as such by clients. Just as their interests are valuable to them, you are representing their interests so if you devalue your fees, you have unintentionally devaluated your client's interests as well.

Are your services calculated on a per diem basis or a fixed rate over a specified period of time? Arrive at a fair and equitable daily rate in advance.

Are you being retained on a monthly basis? If so, be certain your contract spells out the number of hours expected per month. If additional hours are approved by client, the hourly fee should be written in your contract.

A lobbyist working for a company is considered “in-house” lobbying and treated very similarly to a regular employee. He/she must still register if they lobby governmentally.

If you are sometime assigned to lobby for an association, the remuneration is generally on a monthly basis, together with an expense allowance. If extraordinary expenses occur, they are generally approved in advance. An association lobbying relationship is usually on an annual contract basis. You report usually to a Board of Directors or Executive committee.

The next issue on this subject will include:

Organizing a plan of contact information

Determining where and how the issue stands at this time

Who is for it and who may oppose it

How to present yourself and your argument and to whom, and when

Keeping your client fully and accurately informed on a timely basis.

Note: This particular series may not be of immediate interest to all our friends on the mailing list. If you wish to receive the special series, we ask that you send us an e-mail **stanley@thelobbychannel.com** indicating your desire to receive the “series” issues.

If we fail to hear from you it will not be sent. Thanks. Stan L.