



PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
COUNCIL

Lobbyists play a key role in maintaining momentum on issues important to your organization, but how do you make sure the money spent is worth the return?

Evaluating the Performance of Contract Lobbyists

The elements you include in a lobbyist evaluation should be similar to those in your employee evaluations. Just as you do internally, evaluate all aspects of the assignments you make against the lobbyist's performance. Consider these tools when making your assessment:

1. Outline specific legislative goals and be very clear about your expectations. Provide a copy of the evaluation form at the time of the lobbyist's hiring.
2. Track success using concrete measures: For instance, did the lobbyist succeed in getting legislation passed or killed? What role did he or she actually play? If the legislation was passed, was it done by maintaining your organization's good reputation?
3. Monitor the lobbyist's contacts. Do they have access to key decision makers, and if so, how often? What response are they getting? Since the lobbyist came on board, have decision makers become more receptive to your issue?
4. What extra steps did your lobbyist take? Did he help win media coverage for your issue? Did she arrange for a legislator to tour a facility? How often did your lobbyist attend in-district events with lawmakers?
5. Talk with others in the field. What is your lobbyist's reputation with other lobbyists and office holders? Consider a survey to gauge how your lobbyist is viewed by those in direct contact with him or her.
6. Stay in touch. Schedule regular conference calls and require your lobbyists to participate. Keep track of how often they take part in calls. Ask specifics of each lobbyist as it will force them to better prepare for such meetings and will give you solid material to gauge their progress.
7. Have your lobbyists provide regular reports. Decide how often they should be submitted and what they should include. Make sure they are timely and thorough.
8. Track their responsiveness. Contract lobbyists should be available when you need them. If you have trouble reaching them or must wait several days before hearing from them, take note.
9. Consider a rating scale that provides room for comments. (i.e., 1=Exceeded Expectations, 2=Met Expectations, 3=Did Not Meet Expectations)
10. Throughout the year, periodically review your goals with the lobbyist and remind him or her of your expectations.