

THE SHOWALTER GROUP, INC.
ROOTS OF SUCCESS
The Resource for Grassroots and PAC Productivity
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Amy Showalter
Grassroots and PAC
Productivity Expert

- Recognizing Your Stars
- Just when you thought it was safe, Amy's been featured in the **Washington Times** and **other print media**
- Testimonials from our TeleClass: **"Why "Good Job" Isn't Good Enough"** - Amy's Rules for Recognizing Your Star Grassroots Volunteers and PAC Contributors

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From Resistance to Resources: How to Gain Internal Support, Status and Money for Your Grassroots and PAC Programs—Part One

Why do some government affairs departments, specifically grassroots and PAC operations, consistently get increased budget funding and staff resources while others struggle to justify their existence? We track our clients' results, and what we found was startling.

After the conclusion of our collaborations, over 85% of our consulting clients have experienced long-term funding increases, increased staff resources, and enhanced internal status for their grassroots program and/or PAC. So, in hot pursuit of the truth, I wanted to find out what some of these organizations have in common.

Intrepid Accountability / Focus on ROI

It doesn't take DNA evidence to prove the value of grassroots advocacy. I've always believed that one of the reasons many of our programs suffer from the "Rodney Dangerfield Syndrome" is because we have not been candid about our successes *and* shortcomings. While it's true that we would win any "How a Bill Becomes Law" trivia contest among our co-workers, we often assume that they don't understand what we do for our organizations. We then acquiesce to their beliefs by not keeping them informed of our progress. One of the ways we gain respect is by exhibiting accountability for the resources we do have.

From the very start of our collaboration, one of our first consulting clients always impressed me with her attention to detail. I really took notice when she called to thank me for helping them build a strong internal corporate grassroots program. They just won a federal issue which saves the company millions per year, and she had some questions for me.

She was preparing a report to her senior management. She didn't have to do this; her CEO had already publicly lauded their department for helping tilt the debate in their favor. However, she wanted to precisely demon-

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From Resistance to Resources

strate not only the employee response, but also the staff time, materials cost, and other expenses associated with the mobilizations.

She then deftly contrasted that with the cost of hiring an external firm to come in and “create” grassroots enthusiasm for the issue. She went further and contrasted the internal campaign costs with the savings realized by the favorable legislation. The ROI was clearly in her favor. The internal grassroots program was a bargain. Her department was profiled in a major publication that goes to all customers, and she added more staff.

The First Sale is to Yourself

Staff who are able to get more money and resources for their programs believe passionately in their mission. Remember, the first sale is always to yourself.

I was asked by a client to help coach her through a very important presentation to one of her organization's highest governing bodies. We collaborated on her new five-year strategic grassroots development plan, and this group needed to approve the general plan direction. However, they had never heard a grassroots advocacy presentation before. Many didn't even understand the goals and rationale for the advocacy department – not your most welcoming audience. She had to get their buy-in to the five-year plan.

I could tell immediately from our initial conversations that she was (and continues to be) very passionate about the results that their advocacy has already achieved and their grassroots potential. Plus, she was adamant about getting this presentation right. She was not satisfied with reading PowerPoint slides (I always felt that PowerPoint takes us from mediocre to mundane.) We worked on how to grab their attention, tell compelling stories, use attention-getting statistics, and answer their objections before they could even articulate them. She practiced over several weekends. The result? She was told by their COO that it was the “best presentation we've ever heard.” The plan was approved, and she also has hired more staff to support the new direction.

Employee an Internal Marketing Strategy

The operative word here is *strategy*. When I hear political involvement professionals talk about feeling like the organizational “stepchild,” it's usually in the same breath that they have expounded on tired tactics to gain internal support. They aren't thinking about their influence prospect's point of view. It reminds me of people who want to know the “one way” to motivate the grassroots or the “one best way” to raise PAC funds. While intriguing questions, there is no blanket answer to those questions, and people who give you “the one way” are not strategic. Strategic people are inherently flexible; they are always adjusting their approach to the organizational and environmental frame. So, if you want to be strategic, think like a strategist, and plan like a strategist. That doesn't include “magic bullet” approaches.

One of my clients is in the process of reinvigorating his PAC. He could simply announce the recruitment campaign, train his recruiters, and get started. However, he is aware of the problems with previous PAC efforts and the fact that his senior leaders aren't U.S. citizens. *He is taking their frame into consideration* as he develops his internal marketing plan. He has developed a specific internal marketing plan *in addition to* an overall PAC campaign plan. His story isn't complete, but thus far he has received the resources to continue with an aggressive PAC campaign, install new grassroots and PAC software, and get an audience with his CEO to confirm his support.

Attention to the Launch

Simply announcing your PAC campaign or grassroots initiatives via an email probably won't result in energized stakeholders. Think of other major organizational initiatives. The lasting ones are announced in big ways with top leadership participation and endorsement.

One of our clients needed to reactivate his grassroots network. He had one main opportunity – a series of national franchisee meetings which contained his prime audience. He lobbied for and was given podium time at the meetings. Instead of reading a list of legislative issues as his presentation, we carefully crafted a humorous presentation that incorporated persuasive symbols and

From Resistance to Resources (con't)

loss-framing techniques.

The result? More Key Contacts, Action Call response rates tripled, and his CEO "loved it." May of the franchisees in attendance told him it was the "best presentation we've heard at this meeting."

Stay tuned -- in our next issue, we'll reveal the other critical success factors for going from stagnation to status: Finding internal champions, appealing to rationale self-interest, providing success tools, preparing for objections, and institutionalizing user feedback.

Recognizing Your Stars

One of the keys to strategic volunteer recognition is to make it as personal as possible. Many of you probably have volunteers who have served in the military, or have relatives who have served our country. PBS has a moving new National Geographic DVD special: "Arlington: Field of Honor." Buy it here at www.shoppbs.org



Amyism #48

The Competition to Influence: "Many psychologists refer to the human mind as a dark stage lit by the single spotlight of conscious attention. That's why it's smart to have the guy running the spotlight on your payroll."

-- Kelton Rhoads, Ph.D.

"Why "Good Job" Isn't Good Enough - Amy's Rules for Recognizing Your Star Grassroots Volunteers and PAC Contributors"

Here's what people learned from Amy's recent TeleClass on PAC and grassroots recognition strategies:

"I really got a lot out of it- especially the alter-casting technique. It reminds you what a personal business we are all in. Thanks for the motivating seminar. Sometimes it just takes someone else asking you to sit down for an hour and think about this information. I will definitely use the ideas in both my PAC fundraising and our grassroots program. We have very aggressive goals for both programs this year and didn't have any fresh ideas on how to get there. Now, we do."

Sandra Westerman
Vice President of Public Affairs
St. Paul Chamber of Commerce

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"I appreciated hearing that I am doing a lot of things right in terms of my current thinking on this issue. Also some of the ideas you discussed sparked new ideas, which I am excited to share with my colleagues. It was a great brainstorming session for me! I will be discussing the subject with my colleagues and we will come up with a "strategic spontaneity" plan for the coming year."

Julie Snyder
Advocacy Coordinator
Children's Hospital Denver

About The Showalter Group, Inc.

The Showalter Group works with associations and corporations that want to increase their grassroots and PAC productivity. We provide highly customized solutions via grassroots consultation, public affairs staff and volunteer training, coaching for public affairs staff, keynote presentations, and grassroots project management.

To book Amy Showalter to speak at your next meeting, or to inquire about our grassroots or PAC consulting services or other products, contact us at:

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Innovate to Motivate 2006: January 31 — February 3, Key West, Florida www.innovatetomotivate.com

Where has the time gone? 2006 will mark the fifth year of Innovate to Motivate, the conference I co-founded and co-produce with my cohorts, Peter Kennerdell and Tony Kramer. The genesis of Innovate to Motivate was a conversation we had with several experienced political involvement professionals. They asked us to build a high content, challenging learning experience that focused on excellence in grassroots and PAC management.

Because we want all political involvement professionals to succeed in their life and work, we pioneered the inclusion of a holistic curriculum that embraces professional development topics such as communication skills, influence capabilities, time sovereignty, and more. Our attendees tell us these are some of their favorite sessions, as we bring in nationally known speakers who have strong track records of accomplishment in these areas.

To keep Tony, Peter and I on our best behavior, we have conference co-chairs. This year's co-chairs are Kristine Miller of Genworth Financial, and Bradley Smith of the American Chemical Society. Kristine and Brad have been supporters of Innovate to Motivate since its inception, and have already provided us with some important program refinements and guidance.

We will never be satisfied with just executing a conference. We truly want it to be an empowering professional development experience that is challenging, motivational, and is a flash point in our attendees' careers.

We have more checks and balances in place via our Advisory Committee members and conference attendees who give us lots of insightful feedback. Thanks to this year's Advisory Committee members:

2006 Innovate to Motivate Co-chair

Kristine Miller
Genworth Financial

Cassi Baker
Cardinal Health

Ashley Basquin
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway

Darnita Bradley
Columbia Gas of Ohio

Carolyn Carlson
CACI

Glen Caroline
National Rifle Association

Katie Chipps
St. Paul Travelers Company

Jackie Clark
Hallmark

Ann Clayton
ConocoPhillips

Renee Cummings
AOPHA

Callie Jill Denton
Kansas Trial Lawyers Association

Marsha Dionne
National Retail Federation

Graham Dodson
American Electric Power

Christina Dunn
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Mike Egan
Microsoft

Jessica Erickson
Fannie Mae

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NCPSSM

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American Society of Pension Professionals &
Actuaries

Emily Foster
Cummins Inc.

Leann Fox
American Osteopathic Association

Catherine Goldstein
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Interna-
tional

Luke Harms
Maytag Corporation

Carter Headrick
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Jennifer S. Johnson
Pfizer

Corey Kerr
Cardinal Health

Meaghan Killion
International Dairy Foods Association

Anne Knibbs
MWH

Kelly H. Knowles
American Bakers Association

Sharon Ladin
NACHRI

Carrie Langdon
International Paper

Patroski Lawson
Solvay Pharmaceuticals

Colleen Rocha Levine
National Lumber and Building Materials
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Kipp Maloney
National Federation of Independent Business

Linda Melusky
Capital BlueCross

Kathy Merlo
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American Chemical Society

Patti Murphy
Burlington Northern Santa Fe

Judy Ostronic
Northeast Utilities System

Bhavna Pandit
National Association of Home Builders

Debbie Plummer
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Sue Pechilio Polis
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Brian J. Raymond
IBM Corporation

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Mike Tuosto
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The Dow Chemical Company

Laura Vogel
National Association of REALTORS

Renee Walker
Kelly Services, Inc.

Deanna Winstel
Cinergy



Here I am with my Innovate to Motivate colleagues and crowd favorites Peter Kennerdell and Tony Kramer. We are worshipping the "shrine." I have no idea what this is, but I am told that at previous conferences a food shrine was always built at the first meal and it is sure to confer good luck upon the conference. It's something Peter brought to our attention, so what can I say. . .

Amyism #49

Grassroots Effectiveness: "When you meet with your legislators, do they congratulate you for your grassroots prowess, or do they admonish you to develop your grassroots prowess? Listen to what they say, as well as what they don't say to determine your true grassroots effectiveness."



Amyism #50

Recognition: "We can either recognize our volunteer grassroots and PAC advocates when it's convenient for us, or engage in the principle of *strategic spontaneity* to maximize our grassroots and PAC allegiance."

And The Hits Just Keep On Coming. . . What I'm Hearing on the Political Involvement Trail

Before I deliver a workshop or speech, I try to tune in to the staff presentations that take place before my comments so I can reinforce their admonitions and encouragements.

Good News

At this particular engagement, the lobbyist was giving the legislative update, which, although we listen with rapt attention, can be rather boring. This time, the staff was redeemed and their audience perked up when they showed "action shots" of their opponents dressed in various protest costumes.

Social science research, as well as my research with Fortune magazine's "Power 25" demonstrates that effective influencers expose their opponents' tactics and strategies. If you really want to increase your influence "rev range," expose their hypocrisy.

Do your grassroots and PAC advocates know what your opponents say, think, and do? Is there hypocrisy in your opponents' positions? It's one of the "best practices" of Fortune's "Power 25" and something we all should consider utilizing.

Bad News

I observed a listserv where a government relations professional asked two disturbing questions:

- Should he write congratulations letters to newly elected legislators?
- Can anyone on the listserv provide examples he could use to word his letters?

Do I need to elaborate on why this is bad? Isn't this just common sense? (Or, as I often say, "rare sense").
