

“Ag”vocracy **Quick Start** **Guide**

**The Practice of
Advocating for Agriculture**



FARM CREDIT

Knowledge Center

“AG”VOCCACY:

AGRICULTURE:

the science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil and the rearing of animals to provide food and other products.

+

ADVOCACY:

public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.

What is the GOAL of Advocating

Provide information about agriculture so that others can make informed decisions



How Do You Advocate



1. Connect with People
Where They Are



2. Tell Your Story



3. Recognize Preconceived Notions—
Yours and Theirs



4. Be Willing to Answer Questions
Openly and Honestly



5. Know That Effectively
Advocating ≠ Convincing Everyone

**This quick start guide will help you
build out these pieces**

How to Tell Your Story

The SPIT Technique

You'll want to "SPIT" out your advocacy message. SPIT is, of course, an acronym and stands for:

S = Specific

Be specific in terms of what you want and what the audience wants. It is essential that you know what you want and be able and willing to ask for it. You should also look for ways to connect your "ask" to what the audience wants. Your research into the perspectives and interests of your audience will assist you.

P = Personal

You attract people to your cause through a compelling story. We know through a story that the thing we're talking about has had, or will have, an impact on an actual human being. How has your work helped someone find a job or, better, a career? What have you done to improve people's lives in your community? How have you helped boost economic development and prosperity?

I = Informative

In addition to telling your personal story, you'll want to wrap some facts and figures around your argument.

T = Timely

Clearly, contacting a decision maker AFTER a decision has been made rarely works, and it's equally ineffective to contact a decision maker too early. Circumstances may change around your initial contact and the time of the decision. Your job is to build a relationship with them over time so that when the issue does come up, your specific ask is a "no brainer."



Use the following message formula to pull all these elements together. You can use this in a meeting or convert to a written communication or phone call.

My name is and I'm from *[establish relevance by clarifying that you are a constituent]*. I am here to ask for *[specific ask]*.

Knowing of your interest in *[specific to the audience]*, I think you'll be interested, too.

This is important to the people I represent because *[personal story and information]*.

That's why I hope you'll *[specific ask]*.

I'd like to follow-up by *[date]*. When can I get back to you?

Gathering Facts

Utilizing online resources is essential but make sure they are from a reliable and accurate source. Utilizing government sites and university sites is usually pretty safe.

Sites to utilize for gathering information on your topic:

Agfoundation.org/resources

Foodintegrity.org

Usfarmersandranchers.org



Online Conversations: Facts and Tips

- 2 in 3 people get their news from social media*
- 93% of buying decisions are influenced by social media*
- By 2020 video will account for over 3/4 of mobile usage*
- Tone and implications are completely up to reader interpretation
- Once something is written it never truly goes away
- Be willing to speak up if you think a conversation would be better in person

* Socialnomics 2018 Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lcpwISszbQ>

Tying It All Together

Effective Advocacy: Let's CHAT

C = Connect



Know your audience. Find a connection before sharing content. What people, issues, or interests do you have in common?

H = Hook



Get their attention with a strong statement about the issue or problem. Explain the impact on individuals and the community. Describe what outcome you are seeking and your solution for getting that result.

A = Ask



Ask for their support. Describe what you'd like them to do to reach the desired outcome.

T = Thank



Express your thanks for the meeting—and for their support!

For more information, visit the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) website at www.lmc.org.

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After the Conversation

Be sure to follow up with the following:

Thank you letter or email is applicable

Invitation to talk further

Answer any questions that may have been posed during the conversation that wasn't answered or needed follow up



www.FarmCreditKnowledgeCenter.com

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