

Politicians' preferences

After discussions with a number of politicians, Client Solutions decided that there was a real need to conduct a survey to more accurately measure the lobbying preferences of members of parliament.

The aims of the survey were to ascertain what lobbying techniques politicians think works for them; help special interest groups (SIGs) focus their lobbying efforts in order to become more effective; and help politicians influence the way they are lobbied and retain their sanity in the process.

A key to the success of the project was the endorsement of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate who sent a joint letter to MPs extolling the potential virtues of such a survey and urging them to complete the questionnaire.

Almost 50 per cent of those approached responded to the survey. The responses were analysed by party, gender and state to ensure representative sample.

The survey data was analysed

against a range of criteria including party, state, gender, chamber, state and even by former occupation, winning margin and age.

The results of the survey are available as a summarised report or software package from Client Solutions. Some of the survey results are summarised below.

Most common mistakes

The top six mistakes made by SIGs were: asking for too much; raising problems without solutions; misstating the facts; misdirected or badly targeted; representations too late; and poorly briefed or prepared.

'Other' mistakes were allowed to be nominated and produced the following offerings: not appreciating demands for time; too much detail too soon; lack of an overall plan; don't understand what is possible to achieve; and lobbyists get in the way.

Campaigns

The results suggest that for maximum success, campaigns should be

targeted at the electorate level. Most do not believe that letter-writing campaigns are effective but are more likely to respond if electorate or portfolio interests are involved.

Providing ammunition

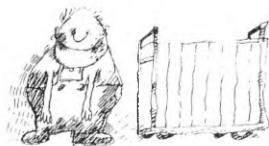
Almost eighty per cent of respondents said they wanted special interest groups to provide them with information for use in question time, debates, and committee hearings.

Invitations

This provided one of the most surprising findings. Ninety per cent of politicians would consider accepting an invitation to a sporting, cultural or social event depending on factors such as their diary, interests, electorate and the nature of the SIG.

For more information about the survey please contact Client Solutions, PO Box 4893, Kingston ACT 2604, or they can be contacted by telephone (06) 282 2471 or fax (06) 282 2953. ■

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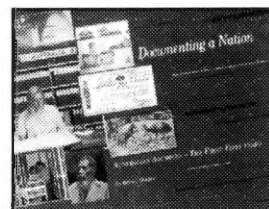
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