



An Engineer's Guide to Influencing Public Policy

An Online Continuing Education Course for Engineers

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An Engineer's Guide to Influencing Public Policy



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Paul Guyer is a professional engineer and registered architect who has been active in efforts to influence public policy at the State level for over 40 years. He headed the governmental affairs programs of two large engineering societies and a business-oriented organization in California, and was a member of two multi-society public policy coordinating bodies. He has been active in partisan politics and at one time had an interest in a small State-level lobbying firm.

Subsequently, for almost nine years he was a senior level member of the staff of the California Legislature. He often testified before legislative committees and conferred one-on-one with legislators, staff members and representatives of other interest groups. These are his thoughts on how engineers should approach influencing public policy.

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Overview

This is a tale told by an Engineer who ventured into a land seldom visited by his kind. Specifically, the *Land of Public Policy*. It is a story filled with high hope, confusion, disillusionment, frustration, anger, a creeping realization of how this strange new world really works and, finally, an understanding of some strategies and techniques that those of his ilk might think about should they like to participate in the *public-policy-making* process. But I digress....

First, let me tell you about the Engineer. He has had a career of about 45 years, over 35 of which were as a straight-ahead designer of infrastructure projects ranging from very large to small. He is a registered Mechanical Engineer, Civil Engineer, Fire Protection Engineer and Architect.

But that is only part of the story. The Engineer was born and raised in a center of government second only to Washington, D.C. in the United States. Born and raised in the Capital of the largest state in the U.S., he grew up in a neighborhood where down the street lived a state Legislator, a U.S. Senator and a high level state political appointee. Across the street lived the son of the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. One of the highlights of the Christmas season was when the Chief Justice....a former Governor of the State....came home for the holidays to go duck hunting with his son and the City Manager. In short, "politics" was part of the Engineer's "DNA."

Moving on....the Engineer got out of college....and his DNA kicked in. He gravitated toward "recreational" politics. In addition to his day-job as an Engineer....he became active on the State level in the governmental affairs programs of two of the largest engineering societies in the United States, as well as a statewide business-oriented organization. He was occasionally active in partisan political campaigns, and was a partner in a small lobbying firm for a short time.

After about 35 years in engineering and engaging in recreational politics, he had the opportunity to do something he had wanted to do since he was a kid.

He was offered a senior position on the staff of the largest State Legislature in the country. And here is where things got interesting. His job for almost nine years was to provide non-partisan analysis of public policy issues and make recommendations to the Members of the Legislature. He prepared reports, testified before Committees, provided one-on-one consultation to Members and their staff, and negotiated compromises with agencies and lobbyists. In short, he had day-in-day-out exposure to public policymakers. And this is what he learned....



Learning Outcomes

Like football and golf, in the public policy arena you need to first learn the rules of the game, and then the techniques and strategies you will need to use in order to play the game effectively. These are the things you will learn from this course about the Public-Policy Game....

The Rules

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