

# Developing a Healthy Relationship with Your Legislators

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# Government: Looking Through a New “Lens”

- Age-old public perceptions
- Reactive business
- Most issues not partisan
- Interactive “sport”
- Designed to be inefficient/parochial
- Things rarely happen for one reason
- Impossible to be an expert in all things
- Not exactly like private business

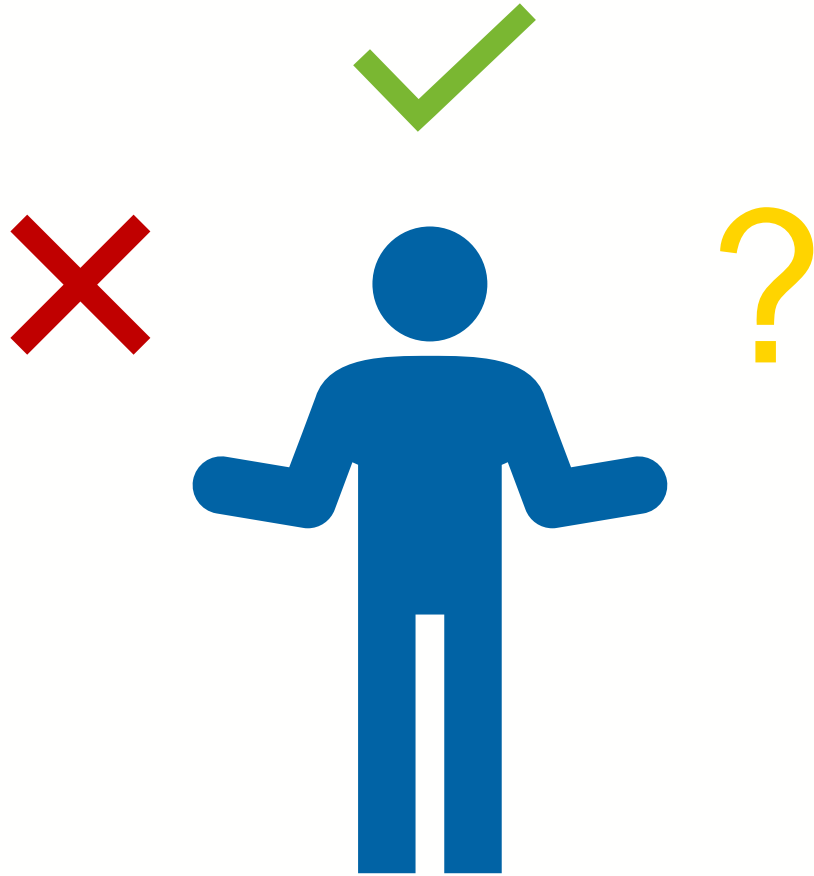


# Job of a Legislator

- Dynamic job description
- Performance review is election day
- Jack/Jill of all trades
  - Decision maker: Vote on rules/laws
  - Policymaker: Legislation
  - Negotiator: Solve problems
  - Constituent ombudsman
  - Media/public affairs spokesperson
  - Candidate
  - Human being



U.S. Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence



# Making a Decision

- Personal Opinion
- Majority rule
- Constituent groups
- Lobbyists
- Political party
- Peers
- Political leadership
- Bureaucracy

# Communicating

- Get to know legislators BEFORE you need something
- Reintroduce yourself
  - Eliminates awkwardness
  - Avoid “Do you remember my name?”
- Personal communication is best
  - Form letter form response
- Keep in touch
- Limit reading material
- Respect their time and situation



# The Power and Potential of Staff



- Don't underestimate
- Get to know and include them
- Control access
- Influence
- Share insights on the process and your issue
- Staffers may ascend to larger roles or elective office

# Make an Impact, Have Influence

- Ask questions, share concerns
- Be yourself
- Stick to what you know, know what you want
- Less is more, simple is best
- Don't demand; be a resource
- Don't let perfect be the enemy of good
- You win some, you lose some
- Say "thank you" and share credit



# Economic Developers' Legislative Strategy

**Build  
Relationships**

**Engage &  
Educate**

**Say  
"Thank You"**

**Share Credit**





## Final Thoughts

- Building trust takes time
- Relationships are vital BUT not encouraged
- Founding fathers and today's media
- Franklin, Adams, the enemy, sharing a bed and evil spirits

# Thank You

