

# Telling Your Story is a Key Part of Effective Advocacy

Your voice matters! Here are a few things you can do to make your story more effective and have maximum impact when speaking with lawmakers.

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## **MAKE YOUR STORIES LOCAL AND PERSONAL**

A story that takes place right in your community is always more compelling. Use examples from your bank (respecting all confidentiality) to talk about how a specific proposal will impact your customers and your ability to serve your community.



## **YOU'RE THE EXPERT**

You can speak better than anyone on how a regulation or law may affect your bank and your customers. Always remember that you're the one who interacts with your bank's processes and procedures and customers every day.



## **GREAT STORIES HAVE GOOD VISUALS**

Think about how you can add color and emotion to your stories. Use memorable analogies, stories, and quotes. Use visuals, such as infographics, whenever possible. Infographics can be fun and imaginative and can help tell the story of the statistic.



## **BACK YOUR STORIES WITH DATA BUT BE SELECTIVE**

One powerful statistic is better than three weak ones. All statistics aren't created equal, and a little can go a long way.



## **BREAK THROUGH THE NOISE**

You likely won't have time to tell your entire story in a meeting with an official. It's more effective to pick a few highlights and have a clear call to action/ask.



## **PREPARE ALTERNATIVES**

Don't be afraid to talk about realistic alternatives that could lessen the impact of a proposed or active regulation/legislation.



## **SHAPE YOUR STORY**

Don't memorize a pitch. Instead, work with your story until you are comfortable. Go over your story/strategy with friends, get their input, then practice it until it flows easily. Communication gets better with practice!



## **CLOSE THE DEAL**

Reinforce your key points and your ask. Most meetings end with, "is there anything you want to add?" Use this opportunity to reinforce key messages and clearly state what you would like the lawmaker to do.

# Building and telling your advocacy story

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## Step 1: Frame Your Message

- Tell the story from your point of view or as someone who has experienced the issue you are trying to highlight. Establish yourself as the expert.
  - Be clear and try to avoid jargons.
  - Structure your message by “problem- solution- action”
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## Step 2: Describe the Challenge

- Describe the problem, who it affects, and its impact.
  - Talk about the barriers and complications.
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## Step 3: Provide interesting and Impactful facts

- Introduce local data. Numbers you provide should complement your story and validate the problem.
  - Who and how many people are impacted?
  - What did you learn? “I learned that.....”, “If we don’t take action, these things can happen...”
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## Step 4: Share a Local Story to Connect the Issue with the Lawmaker

- Use a local story that involves your customers and lawmaker’s constituents. Put a human face on the issue to highlight the community connection.
  - Why this specific bill or policy is important and how it would affect your work and/or the people in your community.
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## Step 5: Make your Request/Ask

- Offer solutions.
  - State what you would like the lawmaker to do/ how can the lawmaker bring about change?
  - Present one-page leave behind or bulleted fact sheet that supports the key points you expressed on the issue.
  - Use phrases like “we have the opportunity to...or I hope I can count on you to support...”
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