



Key Considerations Ahead of Hiring a Communications Partner

THE monumentgroup

Tackling a major business initiative in Texas is not a simple chore. There are layers of complexity and decades of precedent and public opinion that surround every facet of our way of life and how we do business in our state. Texas is diverse and multi-faceted, which means your strategy must be as well.

Our job is to prepare you and your team for all the potential bumps in the road, and opportunities along the path to reaching your goal. That starts with our very first conversation.

This teaser gives you a glimpse into our thinking when we consider client opportunities. How do they apply to your organization's goals and needs?

WHAT are you trying to accomplish?

- ★ First and foremost, is your project or issue Texas-based? Everything we do stems from this question and we put our decades of experience in the state to work for your benefit. Campaigns and initiatives **copy-pasted from other regions** will not work in Texas, which is why local experts are key to success.

WHO are you targeting, and WHY? WHERE are they located?

- ★ Have you considered how your issue will be perceived by West Texans? Houstonians? Residents of the Rio Grande Valley? These and the many other groups and regions of Texas differ significantly in priorities, viewpoints and experience.
- ★ Identifying your stakeholders — and detractors — through a **landscape assessment** means you'll be educated on their perspectives, prepared for their reactions, and understand how to engage them, regardless of where they fall on the issue.

WHEN do you expect to see results?

- ★ Is your issue focused on the legislature? If so, the timeline to prepare for our biennial session **started yesterday**.
- ★ Building relationships is key to success in this state. These relationships aren't forged overnight, which means you have to factor in time to **build coalitions** and recruit allies to your cause.
- ★ Have you studied the history of the issue in the state? Knowing where others have failed or succeeded in the past must inform your plan.

HOW will you accomplish your goals?

- ★ As we mentioned above, making friends is critical to success. Have you already worked with potential allies? Have you built partnerships with like-minded organizations? Forming a network of support is critical not only to achieving your goals, but also to countering opposition. You'll need to develop a stakeholder matrix to understand which organizations (for and against) matter and why.
- ★ To that point, **someone will oppose you**. Have you thought about what you'll do when they speak out? Who is supporting your detractors? Identifying your opposition's financial backing can be key to building an effective strategy.

WHY should you consider hiring an outside communication partner?

- ★ Not to talk ourselves out of a job, but why do you need to engage an outside communications partner? Media crisis? Public affairs hurdles? Lack of public education or awareness? These all vary greatly in strategy, and identifying the right type of communications partner is important.
- ★ Were you working with a previous firm? If so, why are you no longer working together and what should change with a new engagement?
- ★ Are you prepared to invest in a comprehensive campaign in Texas?

As you can see, the more questions we ask, the more clearly we can understand why (or if) we are the right partner, which resources we can draw upon, and determine the tactics necessary to develop a successful strategy.