

PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL VISIT

Do Your Research – Learn about the Member before he/she arrives. Find out their background and areas of interest. Also, know about their recent voting history and what legislation is important to them. The more informed you are and the more personal connections you can make, the more memorable you will be. Avoid discussing controversial subjects. Ensure that your facility is in top notch shape and you are adhering to all relevant regulations (i.e. safety goggles, closed toe shoes, etc.)

Get Your Employees Excited – The Member will sense if your business is excited to have him/her there. You should schedule time during the visit to have the Member speak to all employees. They love the opportunity to speak to their constituents.

Communicate Your Message and Stay on Topic – Why is your business important to the community? What legislative issues are currently affecting your business for the good or bad? How are you adapting as a result of these issues? What could be done better? Remember to stay on message throughout the meeting; focus on the main issues you want to discuss. Be sure to discuss district or state footprint (number of jobs, economic contribution, etc.). Don't assume the Member knows about your company. They are there to learn about you as their constituent. Avoid using acronyms, as the Member will not be well-versed in some of the acronyms you use on a regular basis.

Ask for Something – You can ask the Member to support or oppose a piece of legislation as it relates to your business. Maybe certain transportation issues or taxes are affecting the way you operate or attract employees. Tell them about it and make it personal.

Be Early and Be Flexible - Understand that the Member may run early or late depending on their schedule of events for that specific day. Schedules change often, so provide cushion on both ends of the meeting. Designate someone, likely the CEO or senior executive, to welcome the Member at the entry point and to escort them to the first meeting point. Ensure that all attendees are already gathered in advance of the arrival.

Stick to the Itinerary - You will have worked out an itinerary with the Member's staff so everyone is prepared and knows what to expect. It is important to stick to the agenda and to stay on schedule. You don't want to spend 45 minutes on small talk and run out of time for the tour.

Take Pictures - Consider having someone on staff attend the tour and take photos of the Member interacting with other employees and experiencing the company. This is a great way to document the site visit for you and for the elected official. Many Members often share photos of their constituent tours on their website or via social media.

Plan Media Relations - If media is involved, have a designated point of contact for media and have this person greet them and facilitate conversations/interviews with designated company representatives and the Member. Issue the press release at the start time of the tour. Also, ensure you have relevant background materials to provide to the media outlining your company and the reason for the site tour.

Dress Code - The dress code is business professional.

How to Address a Member - If a senator or representative is in attendance, address them as “Congressman/woman” or “Senator”. On the state level, it is “Delegate” or “Senator” and “Supervisor” or “Councilman/woman” at the local level. In some cases, you will be meeting with staff. Congressional staff members play a critical role for the member; they are responsible for representing their boss and providing them with all necessary information on important topics.

Employee Engagement - Consider inviting your employees to interact with the Member. Some companies have even hosted “Town Hall” style meetings during the last part of the tour so there can be interaction with the employees and a Q&A session. This is often a highlight for the elected official.