

Architects and the Art of Lobbying

Contributed by AIA New York State

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SUMMARY

AIA New York State (AIANYS) created a resource to prepare members for Architects in Albany Day to improve the effectiveness of legislative initiatives. To reach members throughout the state, the session was delivered via the Web to 75 member architects.

MEETING MEMBER NEEDS

Most of the members who participate in the AIA New York State annual lobby day have never had the opportunity to contact their local legislators in either their home districts or the state capitol. In past years, AIA members have remarked about their lack of knowledge on the lobbying process and asked for best practices when working with legislators.

Members did not have an outlet to learn about the process unless they were able to team with more seasoned architect lobbyists when attending Lobby Day. AIANYS members receive informative briefing documents with critical talking points but little practical knowledge on the process of meeting with a legislator. Therefore AIANYS created an interactive Web-based program to provide the tools to productively communicate with legislators.

A TWO-PART PROGRAM

Initially, the program was designed as a live discussion held in Albany. However, after a successful Web-based leadership program was offered in January coupled with the difficulty of taking time out of the office and the expense of a live session, the delivery mechanism became clear, a Web-based conference was the best delivery medium.

The first portion of the program was a panel discussion led by senior staff from the NY State Senate and State Assembly. The group discussed how to properly prepare for a meeting with a legislator and how to follow up after. Attendees learned about the different ways an elected legislator prepares for a meeting. The panel also discussed what they view as a successful discussion when time is very limited.

For the second part of the Web conference, the AIANYS Legislative Counsel and Executive Director reviewed and discussed the 2009 AIANYS

Legislative Program. They discussed goals for the 2009 Architects in Albany Lobby Day. Following each segment, registrants were able to ask the speakers questions.

Seventy-five member architects participated in the conference, surpassing original attendance estimates. The high turn out was a direct result of the Web-based delivery method.

AIANYS organized this event to educate member architect lobbyists about the legislative process, to better prepare them and if successful architects will have a more vocal position in state legislative affairs.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 21.03.15 AIA Pennsylvania Government Affairs: A Model for Success
- 21.03.13 AIA Florida Legislative Day
- 21.03.12 One New York State: Regional Design and Urban Planning

Feedback

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Key Terms

- Leadership
- Associations
- Design associations
- Architectural associations
- The American Institute of Architects
- AIA components
- Legislation