# Pulling it All Together: The Message Formula

The following formula can be used to help you weave each of these elements in to a winning message. While you want to make every message your own, this formula will help in creating your initial message, which you can “tweak” to suit your own needs and interests.

* Knowing of your interest in [fill in the blank with something that you know about the policymaker, such as policy issues he or she is passionate about or legislation he or she has introduced]. *Through this step you are demonstrating* ***relevance*** *to the issues the policymaker cares about*.
* We would like to talk to you about our ideas on [fill in with a **specific**  description of your policy issues ]. *Through this step, you are outlining the specific issue you want to discuss, along with the specific ask, where applicable.*
* We represent [fill in with a number or other quantifiable description] of your constituents. *Through this step you are demonstrating your relevance to those the policymaker represents.*
* We would like to provide the following benefits to them [fill in with the positive outcomes of your proposed policy]. *Through this step you are demonstrating your positive approach*.
* To do so, we are seeking [fill in with your “ask”]. *Through this step you are demonstrating the specific action an official can take to help you achieve your goal.*
* We believe this is important because [fill in with your personal story]. *Through this step you are making the policy issue real for the official.*
* Closing statement: We hope that you will be a partner with us in providing [list benefits] to the residents of [list community/constituent area] by [specific target]. *Through this step you are summarizing the message.*

# Filled Out Message Formula

How does this work? Let’s imagine that you were contacting a legislator in support of legislation promoting tax credits for hybrid vehicles. Although the legislator hasn’t taken a position on these issues in the past, you know from your research that she is very interested in technology issues. You also know that her district is a suburban district, where people have to drive far and sit in traffic to get to work. Many constituents are also concerned about the environment. Here’s how you might use this formula to create a customized message:

* Knowing of your interest in technology issues…
* … we would like to talk to you about our ideas on promoting hybrid fuel technology, specifically, legislation to promote hybrid car tax credits. We believe this legislation may help facilitate a technological solution to some economic and environmental problems in our area.
* I live in your district and represent thousands of other constituents who must drive long distances and sit in traffic to get to jobs downtown. In addition, air pollution from mobile sources, such as cars, is on the rise.
* This legislation would provide the following benefits to us:
  + A tax credit for hybrid cars would save us money, both in terms of potential tax refunds but also in terms of gasoline costs. In addition, with decreased gasoline consumption, we would hope to see improvements in our air quality. Finally, as a result of this tax credit, automakers would be encouraged to build more hybrid cars, increasing the reach of this important technology.
* To achieve these goals, we are asking you to cosponsor and actively support the legislation.
* We believe this is important because many of us are being negatively impacted by increases in gasoline prices. Many of us have to make choices between what we might need or want for our family and the sheer reality of filling the tank every couple days. A hybrid car tax credit would provide us with the economic incentive we need to become less reliant on expensive gasoline. In addition, we want to do everything we can to improve air quality in our area. Last summer, for example, we had more “dangerous” air quality days than in previous years, threatening the ability of our children to play outside. We believe this legislation is a step in the right direction for helping achieve these goals for our community.
* We hope that you will be a partner with us in providing these economic and environmental benefits to the residents of your district by cosponsoring the legislation. We look forward to your response.

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