

# UNSEEN

HOW TO STAND OUT

# TO

BUILD POWER

# *UNSTOPPABLE*

AND MAKE AN IMPACT

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## Introduction

Politics isn't just about who holds the title—it's about who holds the influence. You don't need to be in a leadership position to shape the conversation, drive decisions, or make a lasting impact. Yet, too often, talented and capable individuals find themselves sitting on the sidelines, watching as others steer the agenda. If that sounds familiar, this guide is for you.

If you're looking to strengthen your influence in policy and decision-making, this guide will give you the tools to:

- ✅ **Step into the Spotlight**—Learn how to **raise your profile** and **become a known, respected leader** in your political sphere.
- ✅ **Master the Art of Influence**—Understand how to **build key relationships, forge alliances, and win over power players** who can open doors.
- ✅ **Be the Leader People Listen To**—Develop **persuasive communication skills** to command attention, handle pushback, and shape the narrative.

Influence isn't given—it's built. It's the result of **strategic moves, consistent visibility, and a powerful presence**. The good news? These skills can be learned, and with the right approach, you can go from overlooked to indispensable.

If you're ready to stop waiting for permission and start making an impact. To paraphrase Lin Manuel-Miranda's Alexander Hamilton in "Hamilton," don't throw your shot!

“

I am not throwing away my shot!



Alexander Hamilton in "Hamilton"

”

# Part I: Make Yourself Impossible to Ignore

## **How to Get Noticed & Respected in Local Politics**

Many talented local elected officials remain stuck in the background while others drive the agenda. This isn't always because they lack good ideas or work ethic—it's often because they haven't learned how to **strategically position themselves** as leaders. If you want to move from the sidelines to center stage, you need a game plan.

This section will give you **practical, actionable steps** to make sure your colleagues, the media, and your community **see you as a leader worth following**.

## **The 3 Biggest Reasons Backbenchers Get Overlooked—And How to Fix Them**

### **Mistake #1: You're Only Reacting, Not Leading**

- Many officials focus on **responding to issues instead of driving them**.
- If you're always reacting to what others propose, rather than **putting forward your own priorities**, you'll stay in the background.

#### **Fix It:**

- **Pick a Signature Issue** –Identify **one key topic** that matters to your constituents, aligns with your expertise, and gives you a reason to take the mic.
- **Be Proactive**—Instead of waiting for someone else's proposal to come to you, start asking **what's missing from the conversation?** Then, introduce new angles, ideas, or proposals.


 **Example:** If public safety is a major concern in your district, don't just vote on policing budgets—lead a conversation on how to improve emergency response times or launch a town hall on community policing.

### **Mistake #2: You're Not Speaking Up Effectively**

- Many backbenchers sit through meetings quietly or only speak when directly asked.
- Others speak too often but without impact—rambling instead of making sharp, memorable contributions.

#### **Fix It:**

- **Ask Sharp, Strategic Questions**—The right question at the right moment can shift the entire conversation. Instead of making a long speech, **pose one powerful question** that demands attention.
- **Use the "Headline First" Rule**—Always **lead with your main point, then explain why**. (Example: *"This proposal will cost taxpayers \$2 million. What's the return on that investment?"*)
- **Timing Matters**—Speak early in the meeting to set the tone, or **jump in when the discussion is at a pivot point**—not just at the end.

 **Example:** Instead of saying, "I think we need to consider other funding options," say, "What alternative funding models have we explored to reduce the taxpayer burden?"

### ● **Mistake #3: You're Not Visible Outside of the Chamber**

- If the only time people hear from you is at official meetings, **you're missing opportunities to shape the narrative.**
- Visibility isn't just about showing up—it's about showing leadership **where people are paying attention.**

#### ✓ **Fix It:**

- **Be Present in the Right Rooms**—Attend committee meetings **even if you're not assigned** to them—your presence signals interest and commitment.
- **Engage Outside of Meetings**—Introduce ideas **in informal settings**, like coffee chats with key stakeholders, to build early support.
- **Volunteer for Special Projects**—If a major issue needs a working group, **step up to lead it.** If a new ordinance needs explaining to the public, **offer to host the town hall.**

📌 **Example:** If you want to influence economic policy, show up at chamber of commerce events and be seen talking with business leaders—not just sitting in city hall meetings.

## **How to Ask Sharp, Strategic Questions in Meetings That Get Attention**

### **Why Questions Matter**

The best leaders don't just make statements—they ask the right questions that **shift debates, challenge assumptions, and force action.**

### **5 Types of Power Questions You Can Use**

- **Clarifying Questions** – To expose gaps in a proposal:  
✓ *"Can you walk us through the data that support this decision?"*
- **Impact Questions** – To make others consider unintended consequences:  
✓ *"What will this policy look like in five years? Who benefits, and who loses?"*
- **Accountability Questions** – To hold leadership responsible:  
✓ *"How will we measure success, and what happens if this plan fails?"*
- **Challenge Questions** – To push for stronger solutions:  
✓ *"Why aren't we considering [alternative idea]? What's stopping us?"*
- **Public Perspective Questions** – To force leaders to think about real-world effects:  
✓ *"How will this decision affect a family making \$50,000 a year in our community?"*

📌 **Example:** If a council is discussing a costly infrastructure project, you could say:  
*"Before we approve this, can someone explain how we determined this is the most cost-effective approach?"*

🚀 **Pro Tip: Use Silence.** Ask a question, then stop talking. A well-placed pause **forces people to reflect**—and makes your presence felt.



## Crafting a Distinct Leadership Brand—What Do You Want to Be Known For?

If you don't define your leadership brand, others will do it for you.

Your brand is the **one thing people should immediately associate with you**.

### How to Build It

- 1 Pick a Core Theme**—What issue do you want people to connect with you? (e.g., education reform, economic development, public safety)
- 2 Own It in Every Forum**—Speak about it in meetings, panels, op-eds, and social media.
- 3 Have a Signature Action**—Introduce an initiative, start a working group, or hold public forums on your topic.

📌 **Example:** If you're passionate about affordable housing, don't just vote on housing proposals—host a public conversation on local housing challenges and position yourself as a leader in that space.

## The Power of Showing Up in the Right Rooms (Not Just Attending, But Contributing)

🔥 Showing up isn't enough—you need to be strategic about how you show up.

### Where to Be:

- ✓ **High-Stakes Meetings**—Sit in on key committee meetings even if you're not a member.
- ✓ **Community Events**—Attend business forums, neighborhood meetings, and advocacy gatherings.
- ✓ **Media Panels & Public Forums**—Offer to be a panelist or guest speaker on issues that matter to your community.

### How to Contribute with Impact:

- ✓ **Ask questions** that make decision-makers think (use the strategies above).
- ✓ **Introduce new angles** that aren't being discussed.
- ✓ **Follow up**—After a meeting, send an email summarizing your position or schedule a one-on-one conversation with a key leader.

“

I gotta be in the room where it happens!

Aaron Burr in “Hamilton”



”

## How to Use Public Forums, Op-Eds, and Speaking Opportunities to Position Yourself as a Rising Leader


Want to expand your influence beyond the chambers where the official meetings are held? Get your name in front of the public.

### Best Ways to Get Noticed

 **Speak at Town Halls**—Offer to lead discussions on hot-button issues.

 **Write Opinion Pieces**—Submit op-eds on key policy issues to local newspapers.

 **Be Active on Social Media**—Share policy insights, meeting recaps, and success stories.


 **Do Local Media Interviews**—Be available for TV, radio, and podcast discussions on issues you care about.

 **Example:** Instead of just debating zoning laws in council meetings, write an op-ed explaining why they matter for housing affordability.

### Next Steps: Implement & Take Action!

 Pick one strategy from this section and implement it this month.

 Start positioning yourself as the go-to person on a key issue.

By following these steps, you'll go from being in the background to being a respected, front-and-center leader. 

## Part II: Building Relationships That Open Doors

### How to Win Over Power Brokers & Become a Key Player

Politics is a team sport. No matter how smart, hardworking, or ambitious you are, **your success depends on relationships**. The right alliances will get you access to information, opportunities, and decision-making power. But if you don't build these relationships strategically, you risk being sidelined—no matter how good your ideas are.

This section will walk you through **who you need to know, how to build alliances, and what mistakes to avoid** so that you can position yourself as an essential player in any political setting.

# The 4 Types of Power Players in Any Political Body—And How to Align with Them

Every governing body (and connected stakeholders) has an internal power structure that isn't always obvious. Understanding these dynamics is key to navigating and leveraging influence to your advantage.

## 1 The Gatekeepers (Leadership & Senior Members)

- ◆ **Who They Are:** Committee chairs, longtime incumbents, party leaders.
- ◆ **Why They Matter:** They control key decisions—committee assignments, legislative priorities, and political endorsements.
- ◆ **How to Align with Them:**
  - ✓ Be a team player—support their initiatives before asking for support.
  - ✓ Ask for their advice on an issue to build rapport.
  - ✓ Offer to do the "grunt work" on projects they care about—this earns goodwill.

📌 **Example:** If a senior member is pushing a local economic initiative, volunteer to help shape the policy or build community support. This puts you on their radar as someone who delivers.

## 2 The Workhorses (Policy Experts & Behind-the-Scenes Strategists)

- ◆ **Who They Are:** Wonky, data-driven officials and staffers who know policy inside out.
- ◆ **Why They Matter:** They shape the fine print of laws, amendments, and budgets.
- ◆ **How to Align with Them:**
  - ✓ Learn from them—ask them to break down complex issues for you.
  - ✓ Be useful—offer to take on detailed research or outreach to lighten their load.
  - ✓ Give them credit—acknowledging their expertise earns loyalty.

📌 **Example:** If a policy expert has been working on tax reform, ask them to brief you so you can effectively advocate for the issue. This builds trust and ensures you're included in key discussions.

## 3 The Media & Public Relations Players (Message Shapers & Narrators)

- ◆ **Who They Are:** Communications directors, press secretaries, influential journalists.
- ◆ **Why They Matter:** They control narratives and can boost or bury your political career.
- ◆ **How to Align with Them:**
  - ✓ Build relationships with reporters—be available for background conversations.
  - ✓ Develop your own clear message—don't let others define you.
  - ✓ Use social media wisely—engage with journalists and influencers on key issues.

📌 **Example:** If you're advocating for school funding, connect with education reporters and provide them with data or personal stories that strengthen your case.

## 4 The Connectors (Community Leaders & Major Donors)

- ◆ **Who They Are:** Business leaders, advocacy groups, unions, faith leaders.
- ◆ **Why They Matter:** They mobilize support, raise funds, and influence voter blocs.
- ◆ **How to Align with Them:**
  - ✓ Show up at their events—don't just reach out when you need something.
  - ✓ Find common ground—identify overlapping priorities.
  - ✓ Follow up—after meetings, send a note thanking them and suggesting next steps.

📌 **Example:** If a neighborhood association is concerned about infrastructure, work with them to highlight the issue and push for funding.



# How to Build Strategic Alliances Inside and Outside Your Party

Successful elected officials know how to **build coalitions beyond their usual circles**. Whether you’re working across party lines or within different factions of your own party, strategic alliances **expand your influence and help you get things done**.

## 1 Identify Shared Interests

- Find **one or two issues** that matter to both you and potential allies.
- Look for **nonpartisan topics**—infrastructure, small business support, or veterans’ services are often areas of agreement.

 **Example:** A conservative and a progressive official might both want to reform local zoning laws, but for different reasons. **Find the overlap and build from there.**


## 2 Offer Value Before Asking for Help

- People support those who **bring solutions, not just requests**.
- Help with a colleague’s initiative before asking for support on yours.

 **Example:** If a fellow official is championing environmental initiatives and you support economic development, offer to highlight the job-creation potential of green energy projects.

## 3 Build Informal Relationships

- **Go beyond formal meetings**—grab coffee, attend social events, and have off-the-record chats.
- Personal connections **create trust** that translates into political collaboration.


 **Pro Tip:** If you want to work across ideological divides, don’t just reach out when you need a vote—cultivate relationships consistently.

# The Mentor Advantage—Why You Need One and How to Find the Right One

A mentor can **accelerate your political growth** by offering guidance, opening doors, and steering you away from common pitfalls.


## How to Find the Right Mentor

- ✓ Look for someone who has **achieved what you aspire to**.
- ✓ Choose someone with **access and influence**.
- ✓ Make it easy for them—ask **specific, low-effort questions at first**.

 **Example:** Instead of *"Can you mentor me?"* say, *"Can I take you to coffee for 20 minutes to get your advice on how to be more effective in committee meetings?"*

## How to Maintain a Strong Mentor Relationship

- ✓ **Follow up**—Keep them updated on how their advice helped.
- ✓ **Offer value**—Send them relevant articles or insights on issues they care about.
- ✓ **Be reliable**—If they connect you with someone, follow through.

 **Pro Tip:** Mentorship isn’t just about getting advice—it’s about becoming someone worth mentoring.



## Avoid Rookie Mistakes—What NOT to Do When Trying to Gain Influence

### 🚫 Mistake #1: Being Overly Transactional

- If people feel like you're only using them for your own gain, they won't help you.
- ✅ **Fix It:** Build relationships authentically—engage even when you don't need something.

### 🚫 Mistake #2: Burning Bridges Too Fast

- Today's opponent might be tomorrow's ally.
- ✅ **Fix It:** Disagree without being disrespectful—always leave room for future collaboration.

### 🚫 Mistake #3: Trying to Impress Instead of Listening

- People trust those who listen more than they talk.
- ✅ **Fix It:** Ask insightful questions and absorb information before making big asks.

## 🔑 Exclusive Tip: The Secret to Getting Committee Assignments That Boost Your Influence

The right committee assignment can **accelerate your political career**. It can determine **what issues you shape, who you work with, and how much visibility you have**.

### How to Get on the Right Committee

✅ **Express interest early**—Don't wait for assignments to be handed out—signal what you want before the decision-making process starts.

✅ **Align with leadership priorities**—If leadership values economic development, frame your request around how you can contribute in that space.

✅ **Demonstrate expertise**—Show that you bring knowledge, experience, or fresh ideas that would add value to the committee.

📌 **Example:** If you want to be on the budget committee, start publicly discussing fiscal responsibility and contributing to finance-related discussions well in advance.

🚀 **Pro Tip:** If a top-choice committee isn't an option, accept a secondary one and prove your value—then negotiate a switch later.

### Next Steps: Take Action & Expand Your Influence!

✅ Identify **one power player** you need to connect with and schedule a meeting.

✅ Find a **mentor or advisor** and ask for their guidance on a key issue.

✅ Start positioning yourself for a **strategic committee assignment** next term.

By implementing these strategies, you'll **build the relationships and alliances** that transform you from a backbencher into a **key player in the political arena**. 🚀

# Part III: Owning the Room & Commanding Attention

## **How to Speak with Confidence & Take the Lead in Any Discussion**

The most influential elected officials aren't always the ones with the best ideas—they're the ones who can communicate them effectively. Whether you're speaking in a meeting, debating policy, or addressing the media, **your ability to command attention and inspire action is key to becoming a respected leader.**

This section will teach you how to craft compelling messages, handle tough questions, and shape public perception so that people listen when you speak—and remember what you say.

## **How to Craft Powerful Messages That Resonate with Both Colleagues and the Public**

A well-crafted message moves people to action. But most political messaging falls flat because it's either too vague, too long, or too complicated. The key is to make your messages clear, concise, and emotionally compelling.

### **The 3 C's of a Powerful Message**

- ✓ **Clear**—Simple, direct language wins. No jargon. No fluff.
- ✓ **Concise**—Get to the point in 30 seconds or less.
- ✓ **Compelling**—Use stories, numbers, or contrasts to make it memorable.

#### **Example of a Weak Message:**

*"We need to work toward a better funding structure that accounts for diverse financial needs across municipalities to ensure equal access to educational resources."*

#### **Example of a Strong Message:**

*"Every child deserves a great education, no matter where they live. But right now, a zip code decides school quality. We need a fair funding system that puts kids first."*

## **The "Pivot Strategy"—How to Turn Any Question into an Opportunity to Lead**

Reporters, opponents, and even colleagues will sometimes try to put you on the spot. The best speakers don't just answer questions—they use them to reinforce their key messages.

### **The Pivot Formula:**

- 1 Acknowledge the question** (*That's an important issue... / I understand why people are concerned...*)
- 2 Bridge to your message** (*But what really matters here is... / The bigger issue is...*)
- 3 Deliver your key point** (*And that's why I believe we must...*)

 **Example:**

 **Question:** *"Do you support cutting public transit funding?"*

 **Pivoted Response:**

*"Public transit is a lifeline for thousands of working families. Instead of debating cuts, we should focus on making it more efficient and accessible. That's why I'm proposing a plan to modernize our transit system while keeping costs under control."*

 **Pro Tip:** If you're ever caught off guard, buy time with a phrase like:

*"That's a great question—let's break it down."*

This gives you a moment to gather your thoughts before responding.

## Handling Pushback & Opposition Without Losing Credibility

Every leader faces criticism. **The key is responding in a way that strengthens your authority rather than weakening it.**

### 3 Rules for Handling Tough Questions or Attacks

#### 1 Stay Cool & Composed

 Don't take the bait.

 Keep your tone measured and your body language open.

 **Example:** If someone interrupts or challenges you aggressively, instead of snapping back, say:

*"I appreciate your passion on this. Let's get to the facts."*

#### 2 Flip Negatives into Strengths

 Don't defend—reframe.

 Use challenges as a chance to emphasize your leadership.

 **Example:**

 *"You don't have enough experience for this role."*

 **Reframe:** *"I bring a fresh perspective, and I've built a career on delivering real results, not playing political games."*


#### 3 Know When to Let It Go


 Don't get stuck in back-and-forth arguments.

 Make your point, then **redirect to a solution or next step.**

 **Example:**

 Opponent: *"Your plan won't work—it's unrealistic!"*



 **Response:** *"We can debate all day, but the real question is: how do we move forward? I'm focused on solutions that help our community—let's talk about that."*

 **Pro Tip:** A powerful pause is one of the best ways to defuse tension. Instead of rushing to respond, **pause, take a breath, and then answer.**





# The Media Playbook—Getting Quoted, Landing Interviews, & Shaping Public Perception


## 1 Be a Go-To Source for Reporters

- ✓ Build relationships with journalists **before** you need them.
  - ✓ Offer insights **off the record** to establish credibility.
  - ✓ Send quick, helpful updates on key issues.
-  **Pro Tip:** Reporters love “**plain English**” **soundbites**—the catchier your quote, the more likely it gets published.
-  **Example:**
- Instead of: *"The economic policy framework must be restructured for long-term fiscal sustainability."*
- Say: *"We need a budget that works for working people."*

## 2 Master the 30-Second Soundbite

- ✓ Make your point **fast**—reporters and audiences have short attention spans.
  - ✓ Repeat your key message **3 times** in different ways.
-  **Example:**
-  Topic: Affordable Housing
- "Everyone deserves a safe place to live. Right now, rents are skyrocketing, and families are struggling. We need real solutions—like expanding housing supply and capping out-of-control costs—so people aren’t priced out of their own neighborhoods."*

## 3 Own Your Visual & Vocal Presence

- ✓ **Look the part**—Dress professionally but authentically.
  - ✓ **Project confidence**—Stand tall, make eye contact, and avoid nervous gestures.
  - ✓ **Control your pace**—Speak slightly slower than normal for emphasis.
-  **Pro Tip:** If you're on camera, **lean forward slightly**—it makes you look engaged and authoritative.

## Bonus: Ready-to-Use Speaking Templates for Debates, Policy Discussions & Media Interviews

### 1 Debate & Policy Discussion Template

-  Use this formula to make a compelling case for any issue:

#### Step 1: State the Problem Clearly

*"Too many working families can’t afford childcare, and that’s holding our economy back."*

#### Step 2: Explain Why It Matters

*"When parents can’t find affordable care, they can’t work—and that means lost wages and fewer opportunities for businesses to hire."*

#### Step 3: Offer a Solution

*"We need a tax credit for working parents and investment in childcare providers so we can make quality care accessible for everyone."*

#### Step 4: Call to Action

*"Let’s make this happen—because strong families make a strong economy."*

## 2 Media Interview Template

✂ Use this when speaking to reporters or on-camera:

### Q: *Why do you support [policy issue]?*

✓ **Answer:** *"This is about making sure [who benefits] gets [positive outcome]."*

✓ **Example:** *"This is about making sure small business owners can thrive and hire more workers."*

### Q: *But your opponents say [opposing view]?*

✓ **Answer:** *"I understand their concern, but here's the reality: [key fact]."*

✓ **Example:** *"I get that people worry about cost, but studies show that investing in early childhood education saves money in the long run."*

### Q: *What's next?*

✓ **Answer:** *"We're working on [action step] and need [supporter group] to get involved."*

✓ **Example:** *"We're introducing this bill next session, and we need voters to tell their legislators to back it."*

## Next Steps: Take Action & Own the Room!

✓ Pick one key issue and craft a **30-second message** using the formula above.

✓ Identify an upcoming meeting or event where you can **practice commanding attention**.

✓ Find a reporter or media outlet covering your field and **start building a relationship**.

By mastering these skills, you'll **own every room you step into, shape conversations, and establish yourself as a leader people listen to.** 🚀

## Part IV: Making Your Mark & Driving Real Change

### How to Be Seen as a Leader Who Gets Things Done

Being in the room is one thing—**being the person who drives real change is another**. The most respected leaders aren't just talkers; they're **doers** who consistently push forward meaningful progress, even in tough political environments.


This section will show you how to **choose a defining issue, build influence, win over opponents, and position yourself for leadership opportunities** that allow you to make a lasting impact.

### Choosing a Signature Issue That Sets You Apart

 **Why it matters:** In politics, **specialists win respect faster than generalists**. People need to associate you with a clear, specific issue where you bring expertise and results.

#### Key Criteria for Picking Your Issue:

- 1 It's Personal:** You should have a real passion or connection to it.
- 2 It Affects Many People:** Broad issues (like education, healthcare, or economic growth) have staying power.
- 3 It Has a Path to Progress:** Look for something you can actually move forward, even in small steps.

 **Example:** If you care about education, don't just say "education"—focus on something specific like "expanding career training in high schools" or "improving literacy rates in low-income communities."

#### Action Step:

- Write down **three issues** you care about.
- Research **which one is most pressing and winnable in your political environment**.
- Start positioning yourself as a thought leader by **speaking on it, writing about it, and proposing real solutions**.

### Winning Support for Policies—Even When You're in the Minority

In politics, you won't always have the votes. But that doesn't mean you can't win. The best leaders know how to build coalitions and find leverage points to move their ideas forward.

#### **1 Find Common Ground with Unlikely Allies**

-  **Instead of focusing on party lines, focus on shared goals.**
-  Frame your proposal in a way that appeals to different values.

 **Example:** If pushing for renewable energy in a conservative-leaning council, instead of saying:  
 "We need to fight climate change."

 **Say:** "This will create local jobs and make us energy-independent."

 **Action Step:** Identify one potential ally from the other side of the aisle and find a way to connect on a shared issue.



## 2 Use Public Pressure to Shift the Debate

- ✓ Engage grassroots organizations that can rally community support.
- ✓ Use media strategically—press releases, op-eds, social media campaigns.
- ✓ Frame your policy as common sense rather than partisan.

📌 **Example:** If you're in the minority and your proposal won't get a hearing, **launch a petition, hold a town hall, or get local businesses to publicly back it.**

### 🚀 Action Step:

- Identify a local media outlet that will cover your issue.
- Draft a **short, compelling op-ed** explaining why this issue matters to the community.

## How to Turn Small Wins Into Big Momentum

🔑 **Why it matters:** No one jumps straight to big wins—**momentum is built through smaller, strategic victories.**

### 1 Start with Achievable Goals

- ✓ Pick an issue with a **clear, manageable first step.**
- ✓ Celebrate small progress to keep supporters engaged.

📌 **Example:** If your goal is major education reform, start by **securing funding for a pilot program or getting a public hearing scheduled.**

### 2 Use Every Win to Build Your Influence

- ✓ After every small victory, make it public.
- ✓ Thank supporters and emphasize what's next.

📌 **Example:** If you pass a small piece of legislation, send an email blast, hold a press conference, and say: *"This is just the beginning. Next, we're working on [bigger goal]. Join us!"*

### 🚀 Action Step:

- List **one small policy or initiative you can champion.**
- Create a **step-by-step plan** to build momentum toward a bigger goal.

## Strategies to Position Yourself for Leadership Roles & Future Opportunities

### 1 Build a Reputation for Getting Things Done

- ✓ Be known as a problem-solver, not just a talker.
- ✓ Stay **accessible** to colleagues and **help others** move their initiatives forward.

### 🚀 Action Step:

- Identify **one area where you can become the "go-to" expert** and actively contribute.

### 2 Strengthen Your Network of Influential Supporters

- ✓ Find mentors who can open doors.
- ✓ Build relationships **with power players behind the scenes.**

📌 **Example:** If you want to chair a committee, **start by assisting current committee leaders and proving your expertise.**

### 🚀 Action Step:

- Reach out to **one established leader** and ask for **advice on advancing in your role.**

### 3 Know When to Make Your Move for Leadership

✓ **Watch for leadership transitions** and position yourself as a natural choice.

✓ **When the opportunity comes, have clear, actionable ideas** on why you're the best person for the job.

✂ **Example:** If a committee chair is retiring, **start making the case to colleagues early** about why you should take over.

#### ✈ **Action Step:**

- Identify **one leadership role you want in the next 1-3 years**.
- Start building **the skills and relationships needed to get there**.

## Final Takeaway: Your Legacy Starts Now

💡 The best political leaders **don't wait for opportunities—they create them**.

✓ **Pick your signature issue and start owning it.**

✓ **Use strategic alliances to win support, even in tough environments.**

✓ **Turn small wins into momentum that builds your reputation.**

✓ **Position yourself as a leader people trust to get things done.**

🏆 **Because when you're seen as a leader who delivers results, doors open—and real change happens.**

## BONUS RESOURCES

### Influence Is Built Over Time

✂ The **best elected officials aren't just in the room—they make themselves impossible to ignore**. These tools will help you track your influence and relationships, ask the right questions, and maintain a strong, visible, respected presence in your political arena.

#### 💡 **Success Formula:**

✓ **Influence Tracker → Strategic Networking**


✓ **Power Questions → Credibility & Respect**

✓ **Visibility Checklist → Staying Top of Mind**

🏆 When you consistently show up, contribute, and build the right relationships, leadership opportunities will come to you.

# Influence Tracker:






## A Worksheet to Map Out Your Political Relationships & Networking Goals

 **Why You Need This:** Politics is all about relationships. But influence doesn't happen by accident—you need to track, build, and strengthen your key connections **strategically** over time.

This worksheet helps you:

- ✓ Identify the **most influential power players** in your sphere.
- ✓ Pinpoint **gaps in your network** and where you need to build new relationships.
- ✓ Set clear, measurable goals for **strengthening key alliances**.

### Step 1: List Key Political Power Players in Your Sphere

-  **Elected officials:** Who holds key roles? Who do you need stronger relationships with?
-  **Committee chairs & influencers:** Who controls the agenda?
-  **Media & thought leaders:** Who can amplify your message?
-  **Key donors & fundraisers:** Who can provide financial support for your initiatives?
-  **Grassroots & advocacy leaders:** Who can mobilize public support?

#### Action Step:

- Rank these individuals by **level of influence** (High, Medium, Low).
- Note whether they are **allies, neutral, or opposed** to your key policy interests.

### Step 2: Set Relationship-Building Goals

For each high-value connection, define:

- ✓ **How you will engage them (e.g., coffee meeting, supporting their initiative, social media interactions).**
- ✓ **What value you can provide them (e.g., vote support, visibility, policy ideas).**
- ✓ **What outcome you want (e.g., co-sponsorship, committee seat, media mention).**

#### Action Step:

- Identify **five people you need to connect with** this month and set a plan to reach out.





# The Power Question List:

## 10 High-Impact Questions to Ask in Meetings to Gain Credibility

 **Why This Matters:** Asking **sharp, strategic questions** makes you stand out as a serious, thoughtful leader. It signals that you're engaged, prepared, and thinking about the big picture.

### 10 Power Questions to Use in Meetings

- 1 "Can you clarify how this aligns with our long-term goals?"** (Positions you as someone focused on strategy, not just the moment.)
- 2 "What data do we have to back up this decision?"** (Demands accountability and a fact-based approach.)
- 3 "How does this compare to how other communities have handled it?"** (Shows you're looking beyond local politics for smart solutions.)
- 4 "If this doesn't pass, what's Plan B?"** (Forces contingency planning and demonstrates leadership.)
- 5 "What's the biggest risk we're not talking about here?"** (Gets people thinking critically about potential downsides.)
- 6 "Who benefits the most from this policy, and who might be left behind?"** (Shows you're considering fairness and equity.)
- 7 "How will we measure success a year from now?"** (Holds people accountable and ensures follow-through.)
- 8 "What's the biggest obstacle to making this work, and how can we address it?"** (Positions you as a problem-solver, not just a critic.)
- 9 "Has there been any community input on this? What have we heard?"** (Demonstrates that you care about public engagement.)
- 10 "What's one change we could make to improve this before voting on it?"** (Encourages refinement and collaboration rather than immediate opposition.)


### Action Step:

**Pick three questions** to ask in your next meeting and observe the reactions you get.



# Visibility Checklist:

## 5 Things to Do Every Month to Stay Front & Center

 **Why This Matters:** In politics, **out of sight is out of mind**. Staying visible—both publicly and behind the scenes—keeps you relevant, builds credibility, and positions you for leadership opportunities.

### 5 Must-Do Visibility Actions Each Month

#### **1 Speak or Ask a Strategic Question at Every Meeting**

- Even if it's brief, **contributing in meetings** (city council, committee hearings) ensures you are seen as an active player.
- Use the **Power Question List** (above) to frame your contributions.

#### **Action Step:**

- **Review the agenda before each meeting** and prepare at least one key question or comment.

#### **2 Publish or Share Thought Leadership Content**

- Write **one op-ed, blog post, or LinkedIn article** on an issue you care about.
- **Share news articles** with insightful commentary on social media.
- Pitch yourself as an expert for **a media interview or panel discussion**.

#### **Action Step:**

- Set a goal to **publish one piece of content each month**—even if it's just a well-crafted LinkedIn post.

#### **3 Engage with Power Players & Stakeholders**

- Have **at least two one-on-one meetings** with key influencers.
- Attend **at least one networking event** with potential allies.
- **Publicly support** a colleague's initiative—alliances matter.

#### **Action Step:**

- Identify **two key people** to connect with this month and schedule a meeting.

#### **4 Show Up in the Community**

- Attend local events, town halls, or community forums.
- Meet with advocacy groups, business leaders, or neighborhood associations.
- Use these events to **speak on key issues** and build name recognition.

#### **Action Step:**

- Pick **one event this month** where you can introduce yourself and connect with constituents.

#### **5 Keep Your Name in the Media**

- Send **a press release** on a key initiative or accomplishment.
- Offer to **comment on a relevant issue** for local journalists.
- Appear on a **podcast, radio show, or local news** program.

#### **Action Step:**

- Make a list of **three journalists or media outlets** to reach out to and plan your pitch.

