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Integrated Political Action Strategies: Growing a Political Action Committee

CHALLENGE

Increase the political action committee (PAC) of her client, a U.S. subsidiary of an international company, as part of a new corporate strategy to have a full-time, in-house, government relations presence in Washington, D.C. The PAC was severely underutilized and being dramatically outspent by its competitors in the architectural, engineering, consulting, and construction community.

ACTIONS

Warner conducted a top-to-bottom review of the government affairs program and recommended a complete overhaul of the PAC's processes. Key activities included:

Evaluation

- Evaluated the PAC's operating procedures and compliance with Federal regulations, solicitation, and contribution strategies;
- Recommended and implemented new operating procedures that ensured: the Election Cycle Plan was met, internal advanced coordination among all PAC members and participants, streamlined participation in events, and timely processing of receipts and contributions made;
- Worked with internal and external counsel to develop and implement training programs and procedures to ensure that the PAC complied with Federal Election Commission regulations and guidelines; and,
- Developed and communicated organizational policies on Federal ethics/gift ban limits and reporting requirements. Education and Communication
- Created an Issues Management and Advocacy Program that identified and prioritized the key issues of importance to the industry, the company and its customers;
- Planned and implemented a PAC communications program that included newly-created newsletters and a PAC website; and,
- Developed and implemented a donor recognition program.

Solicitation Programs

- Developed and executed a solicitation program that included identifying key states and partnering with newly-selected state coordinators, making personal presentations to eligible employees, and providing regular communications on why a strong PAC is a vital tool for an effective Federal government relations program.

Targeting Contributions

- In the 2010 Election Cycle, the PAC contributed triple the amount to candidates compared to the 2008 Election Cycle;
- In the 2012 Election Cycle, the PAC's budget was reduced significantly, but still effectively contributed to more candidates than during the 2010 Election Cycle plus the national committees; and,
- In all three election cycles, the PAC enjoyed notable high win ratios for its industry – not an easy accomplishment given the unpredictability and unique characteristics of each election cycle.

RESULTS

Donations to the PAC increased from \$148K in the 2008 Election Cycle to \$166K in the 2010 election cycle as a result of an assertive internal education and solicitation program. The average annual donation, per employee, to the PAC increased roughly 10% from the 2008 Election Cycle to the 2010 Election Cycle. There was another slight percentage increase in the annual employee contribution from the 2010 Election Cycle to the 2012 Election Cycle.

Growing a PAC		
2008	2010	2012
\$91K contributed to 48 candidates with 84% win ratio.	\$287K contributed to 98 candidates with an 82% win ratio.	\$245,500 contributed to 100 candidates and four national committees with a 98% win ratio.