

# Influencing active living policy and practice: *How can I improve my pitch?*

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*'The Science of Policy Implementation' Active Living Research Conference San Diego 2015*



# Welcome

- Key goal of active living research – change policy and practice
- Easier said than done
- Researchers often frustrated
- Policy makers often don't take research(ers) seriously
- How do we close the gap between researchers and policy-makers?

# Workshop learning objectives

- Identify key elements in a pitch to influence decision-makers.
- Learn practical skills in writing and presenting to different types of decision-makers: politicians, bureaucrats and practitioners.

# Introductions

- Who are you? Where are you from? Why are you here?

# Program

- Four 5 minute pitches and 5 minute feedback on each pitch (40 minutes)
- What makes a good pitch from workshop presenters' perspective ? (10 minutes)
- Break into four groups– discuss what would have enhanced the presentation, discuss how to change the presentation; revise presentation (25 minute) and decide who will present (same person or another?)
- Four 5 minute pitches (20 minutes) with feedback (40 minutes)
- Brainstorm key lessons about what makes a good pitch (15 minutes)
- Group process in prioritising key lessons (dotmocracy) (10 minutes)
- Wrap up

# Presenters



	Description
Jordan Carlson, UCSD	Researcher to practitioner seeking collaboration
Megan Lent, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	Advocate asking for policy change
Katie Crist, PhD student, UCSD	Interagency request – health researcher into transport policy
Bianca Shulaker, The Trust for Public Land	NGO to a Gov agency

# Pitching Research to Policymakers

Bill Fulton  
Former Mayor, Ventura, CA  
Former Planning Director,  
San Diego CA  
February 22, 2015



*Stanford Moore*

# Rice University's Kinder Institute For Urban Research

## *Mission:*

- **Advance understanding of the most important urban issues** facing Houston and other leading urban centers through rigorous research, policy analysis, and public outreach;
- **Collaborate with civic and political leaders to implement promising solutions** to these critical urban issues.



# How Policymakers Differ From Researchers

- They operate at a very fast pace.
- They are interested in action, outcomes and public perception.
- They are not interested in theory.
- They are not interested methodology in unless a political opponent can shoot holes in the methodology as a way of discrediting a course of action.

# What Policymakers Need

- They are desperate for good policy ideas they can act on quickly.
- They get spun all the time by advocates who pitch them policy ideas.
- They have little bandwidth to vet advocacy-based ideas to see whether they will really work.

# How To Talk To Policymakers

- Be concise – don't waste their time.
- Show them how your research can be easily translated into policies and actions that will help them address pressing problems.
- Be honest and straightforward. Show that you are presenting evidence-base research that will work – not just advocacy ideas that some people like.



## **Improving Your Pitch: Elected Officials**

Tracy Delaney Ph.D., R.D., Executive Director

Active Living Research Panel

February 22, 2015

## Opener: Quick, Simple and Compelling

- Need to grab attention right out of the gate. Start with your strongest foot forward.
- What is the issue of concern and why important?
- How does their jurisdiction measure up? (No elected wants to be on the bottom)
- Many competing issues come over their desk. They need to be a jack of all trades—so your issue needs to pop.

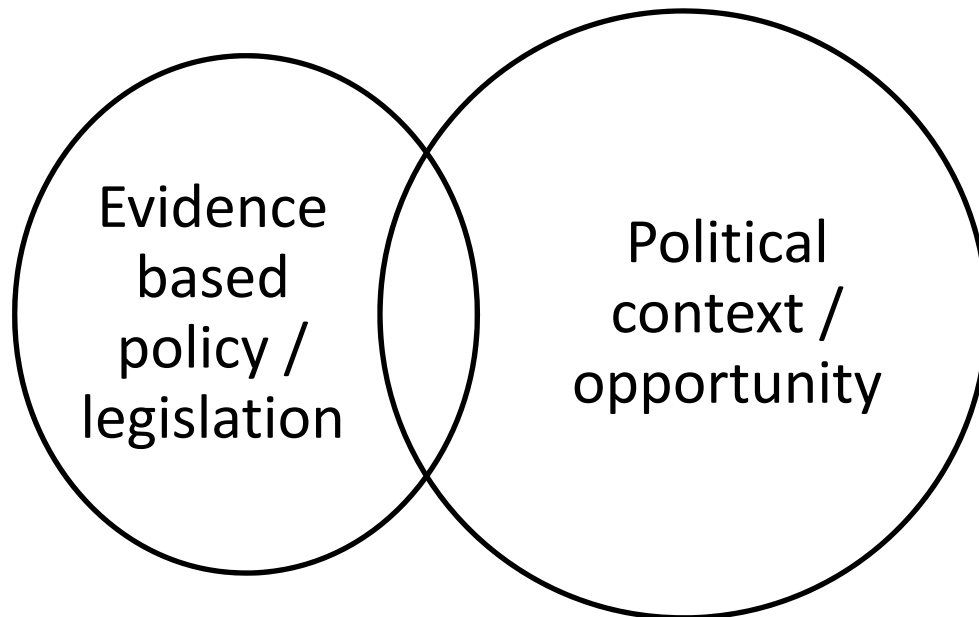
## Make it about them

- How does this align or propel their interests/priorities/mandates?
- How this issue is something they can affect.
- (Always helps to make the business case—if possible.)

## Conclude with Tangible Action / Offer

- Provide time-sensitive element, need for action now
- Upcoming funding source
- Adoption of General Plan
- Sign-on to a resolution

# Aligning evidence based policy with political context



- Windows of opportunity
- Awareness of current party's priorities
- Evidence based solutions
- Options to solve a policy problem



# Before the Meeting

- Consider strategic partners who could attend
- Prepare a briefing document with purpose, key points of evidence, proposed policy solutions and contact details
- Evidence based policy proposals for pressing issues – solutions framed in current political context
- Localise the issue and explain how it affects the politician
- Identify potential barriers to your policy proposals and have solutions / responses prepared

# During the Meeting

- Brief intro and clear solution based proposals
- Language framed in the context of the target agency – political as well as policy priorities
- Remain open to incremental engagement – seeking follow-up action and engagement
- At least one policy person will be in the room who is familiar with the evidence and will be a trusted source
- Wrap up with next steps, contact details and leave the brief with the politician

# After the Meeting

- Compare notes with your 'pitch' colleague
- Prepare a file-note with follow-up actions
- Send a thank you with the draft file-note
- Establish some way to maintain periodic contact (bulletin contact list)
- Relationship building for a forthcoming opportunity is a positive outcome (you never know where you're paths will cross again)

# Wrap up: Improving your pitch

1. *Understand realities of ‘policy world’ we are attempting to shift*
  - ‘Tell us something we don’t know’ (Allender et al. 2009).
2. *Understand the needs of policy-makers and practitioners*
  - *What research do they need undertaken to influence policy and practice?*
  - *Attend **their** seminars and conferences*
3. *Tie your pitch to THEIR needs*
4. *Be concise – don’t waste their time*
5. *Be specific about policy implications*
6. *Be honest*
7. *Don’t do it all yourself – work with advocates*

<sup>1</sup>Giles-Corti, Sallis, Sugiyama, Lowe, Owen (2014) **The Built Environment and Chronic Disease Prevention: Translating Active Living Research into Policy and Practice**

# Further Information

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