

Be the *Expert* this Election Season – **ENGAGE THE GRASSROOTS!**

MELISSA MCKINLEY | President, Kelley Cawthorne, and
JACQUELEN TIMM, CAE | Director of Communications and Association Management, Kelley Cawthorne

Here we are again...another election year! Local and state elections—you ask yourself, “*how can I be heard and involved?*” This is a great time of year to engage in grassroots advocacy efforts. Candidates are closely paying attention to voices of constituents during this time.

One of our civic responsibilities as voters and association leaders is to inform our elected officials (or soon-to be elected) on issues important to our communities and us. Our representatives cannot provide solutions to their constituent’s problems if they aren’t hearing from them. Known as grassroots advocacy, this is an effective and powerful way to communicate with public officials and start a conversation to create change.

A successful grassroots advocacy campaign has many components to it, however the most important is the people. Associations have a built-in structure which starts with the people they serve, who can activate their voices as constituents and voters. The most effective lobbying campaign includes a strong grassroots effort where candidates are hearing from those that will help to put them in office or keep them there once elected. Grassroots advocacy is indirect lobbying and aims to involve citizens personally affected by an issue at the heart of an organization’s mission.

Anyone can conduct a grassroots campaign, but when we think about organized and effective efforts, it usually comes from nonprofits, trade associations, and public/private companies. While all of these groups have the same objective, how they approach grassroots advocacy can be very different.

A few approaches you can take:

1. Identify your priorities/goals and build out a plan. (Timelines, communications, marketing, etc.)
2. Activate your membership list.
3. Contact and set meetings with local representatives to find out who will support your legislative agenda. Tell your story with personal experiences.
4. Send out call to action/legislative updates to members.
5. Volunteer to door knock for candidates who are supportive of your mission and goals.

Whatever approach you decide to take, just remember that elected officials WANT to hear from their voters. It is so important that the EXPERTS educate their legislators/elected officials, so that real change is made!

For more information about grassroots advocacy or Kelley Cawthorne, email Jacquelen Timm, CAE, at jtimm@kelley-cawthorne.com.

Meet Melissa and Jacquelen



Melissa McKinley is the President of Kelley Cawthorne in Lansing. She has been with the firm for over nineteen years. Melissa attended Michigan State University and has worked in the Michigan House and Senate. She specializes in healthcare, transportation, education and so much more!



Jacquelen Timm serves as the Director of Communications and Association Management. She has been with the firm since 2022. Prior to joining Kelley Cawthorne, Jackie worked for the Michigan House of Representatives, the Michigan Association of Broadcasters, and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. She is the AMC representative on the MSAE Board of Directors.

You can learn more about Melissa and Jackie here: www.kelleycawthorne.com

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