

Build your industry story.

Facts explain an issue. Stories explain why it matters.

Policymakers and candidates hear statistics all day. What they may not hear is what a policy decision actually means for a business, employee, exhibitor, venue, association, or community back home.

ECA can help you build your industry story in four easy steps.

Step #1: Who are you?

My name is: _____.

I live/work in: _____.

My role in the business and professional events industry is: _____.

Step #2: What does your work make possible?

- ☐ Creates jobs
- ☐ Supports small businesses
- ☐ Brings visitors to my community
- ☐ Connects buyers and sellers
- ☐ Provides education or professional development
- ☐ Introduces new products and ideas
- ☐ Supports an association's or nonprofit organization's mission
- ☐ Other: _____

One thing I wish candidates understood about my work is: _____.

Step #3: How does the policy issue affect you?

The issue I want to discuss is: _____.

Here is one real example of how this issue affects my organization, customers, employees, event, or community: _____.

Step #4: What do you want them to understand?

Finish with a question:

“Given that experience, how would you approach _____?”

The 30-second version:

“I'm [NAME] from [CITY/ORGANIZATION], and I work in the business and professional events industry. Our work [ONE-SENTENCE IMPACT]. [POLICY ISSUE] matters to us because [ONE REAL EXAMPLE]. I'd like to know: [QUESTION].”

Example:

“I'm Alex from Indianapolis, and I work with an exhibit design company that supports trade shows around the country. Our events connect small businesses with customers they otherwise might never meet. Tariff uncertainty matters to us because it affects the cost of many of the materials our clients use to exhibit. How would you approach trade policy while limiting unintended costs for small businesses?”

That is far more memorable than reciting five statistics.

Three rules for a good story

Make it real.

Use something you have personally seen or experienced.

Make it local.

Jobs, businesses, customers, and events in a candidate's state or district are especially useful context.

Make it short.

The best story is often 30–60 seconds.