

look perfect on homo consultants's drawing board but to which the client only responds with a frown of disbelief – perhaps because they do not reflect his or her political self-image, represent a radical break with important traditions or are simply too complex and technically challenging – are ultimately not practicable. The same applies to approaches that may reflect all the preferences of homo consultantus and fit exactly with his or her political ideology or corporate philosophy, but are not covered by a sound risk assessment or a realistic arena analysis. Here the power consultant is called upon to establish a strategic agreement through professionalism and empathy.

Strategy development is the bridge between the consolidation of political information and knowledge on the one hand and concrete policymaking on the other. Only when the strategy is implemented by tactical savvy, motivated and efficient people and organizations, can the homo consultantus can take control of the game of power chess. The great German soccer coach Alfred Preißler very strikingly paraphrased an old Faust quotation: “All theory is grey – what matters is what's on the field.”³⁹ In the following section, we therefore go directly to the political playing field and clarify the guiding principle of political influence and the organizational practice of exercising power.

3.4 INFLUENCING

Political influence, the concrete exercise of power in the field of politics through interaction with organizations and persons, is the litmus test for the previous empowering and condensing. Only if the first two elements of the power leadership approach have been implemented effectively can homo consultantus and homo consultants jointly take control of the game of power chess. This applies equally to both forms of the approach – political leadership and lobbying leadership. What it means to successfully influence politics depends entirely on the goals of the power actor: re-election to a post, organizing a voting majority, revising a directive, averting regulatory restrictions, legalizing a product, subsidizing an industrial sector, or implementing a new business development calculus. Planned policy influencing always involves transforming a power strategy into an actual event by the purposeful use of power leadership tools.

39 Cf. The original quote by Preißler – “Grau is’ alle Theorie – entscheidend is’ auf’m Platz”, in: Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung from 7th April 2015.

This reveals the dominant focus of this section. Political influencing is ‘only’ about the practical implementation of a strategy and the organizing and coordinating of the relevant action steps, thus in this section we briefly describe the guiding principle of influencing with its instruments, methods and techniques. The essential tools used for influencing have already been detailed in Chapters 3.2 and 3.3. Their scope is ultimately slim and minimalistic. For the sake of clarity, it can be summarized in tabular form:

Figure 20: Tools of Political Influencing

Team Composition	Coordination
Task distribution and definition of a decision hierarchy within the strategic project team	Creation of a timetable for the strategic project and management of the relevant schedules
Political Talks and Formats	Stakeholder Dialogues
Contacting decision makers and organizing discussion formats (Roundtables, Panel Discussions, One-on-Ones, Parliamentary Evenings, Breakfast Debates, etc.)	Contact relevant stakeholders and organize exchanges on positions, interests and perspectives
Alliance Building	Campaigning and Mobilizing
Active formation of partnerships in the pre-political and political area (ad-hoc alliance, permanent alliance, founding of an association, etc.)	Target-oriented development and steering of political key messages via relevant communication channels (online, offline)

It is already clear from this set of tools that the power consultant performs numerous management functions in parallel during the design phase, acting as a project manager, event manager, communications manager and customer manager. Each of these roles has its own tasks and responsibilities. Exercising all these functions requires sensitivity for power relations, discretion and, not least, a social instinct, for instance in deciding how to address a particular conversation partner.

Setting up a team and coordinating between homo consultandus and homo consultans involves the classical tasks of project and customer management. Here the power consultant requires the ability to manage personnel and to define solid,

stable and clear work packages, as well as conscientious time management. In the daily work process, regular telephone or video conferencing with the client (and, where applicable, the client's partners) must be organized in order to discuss the implementation status of the strategy and acute, tactical and organizational requirements. The power consultant or project team prepares and adjusts the agendas, moderates the conferences, and then summarizes the results. In addition, internal meetings and workshops must also be planned and prepared. Professionalism and sensitivity are required not only with regard to content here, but also as concerns the organizational side: from the daily agenda to route descriptions to the provision of technical infrastructure (beamer, laser pointer, WiFi connection, etc.) to catering.

There are numerous operational challenges in this area that call for strong nerves and routine: problems getting hold of interlocutors, scheduling overlaps and shifts, short-term changes to plans or trivial technical problems, such as the failure of conferencing software. These challenges are more pronounced and serious, since the individuals involved are usually active on a high hierarchical level in their organizations and have little time. Accordingly, the homo consultants is subject to double pressure in the performance of the coordinative tasks: the precious time of both his or her own team and that of the client must be used to maximum efficiency.

The role of an event manager in the political field, on the other hand, comes with the planning and implementation of political discussion formats – with state decision-makers as well as with stakeholders from business, civil society, science and culture. Organizing such an event (for example, a parliamentary breakfast, a charity event or a multi-session conference) is a highly political act: Who is invited? Who should sit where? In what order are the guests presented? What background information should be provided in advance? What content is presented how? These practical questions need to be clarified in light of the results of intelligence processing, stakeholder mapping, network analysis and other condensing tools (see Chapter 3.3.1). Only when condensing and influencing are seamlessly interlinked can an event be a success.

Political event management is not exhausted in ensuring the right composition of guests and interlocutors and maintaining and updating the corresponding mailing lists. Even the choice of appointment can sometimes prove challenging. On the one hand, it is necessary to plan in accordance with the rhythms of political business (session weeks, committee meetings of Congress, parliaments, EU Council meetings, etc.) and major political events (elections, coalition negotiations, referendums, G20 summit, etc.). On the other hand, the extreme density of events during these high phases of business operation must be taken into account. For

example, during the weeks when the German Bundestag sits there are around 700 evening events of political relevance every day. Accordingly, homo consultants usually has to be prepared for and able to deal with very high no-show rates at events. In addition short-term cancellations by keynote speakers, celebrity guests or subject matter experts are not uncommon. To compensate for such no-shows – for example, by subsequently inviting new participants or by persuading the undecided – hundreds of phone calls are often required. Those who are unable to remain both conciliatory and determined under time pressure are unsuited to the tasks of the power consultant.

Both alliance building and campaign leadership demand that the power consultant use the talents of a communication manager and communicator. In both cases, the focus is on communicating content and topics, and on creating trust and credibility and attracting attention. The initiation of political alliances calls for communicative empathy and the ability to use present knowledge about the contact person to build common ground; this can be found in the shared awareness of certain pressing political issues, but also in personal connections, such as an enthusiasm for craft beer or literature. When building alliances, the definition of the initiators is of paramount importance, as well as the decision as to whether it is an open or closed initiative. The success or failure of political alliances depends to more than 80% on their structure and the clarification of such issues.

Political campaign mobilization, in turn, requires a high degree of sensitivity to ongoing changes in the communications environment. Precisely because campaigns cannot be linearly planned and implemented, the power consultant must be able to keep a finger on the pulse of the discourse during the influencing phase and react creatively and spontaneously to new parameters.

There are also numerous practical challenges associated with the communicative focus of activity. So, it is one thing, for example, to draw up political messages in the context of strategy development *in abstracto*; but it is quite another to fill them with life through concrete formulations (in letters, e-mails, brochures, position papers, newspaper articles, social media postings, speech manuscripts, etc.). Here, all the lessons of the field of political language (see Chapter 3.2.2) must be applied, sometimes within a few minutes in cases of crisis communication or in extremely short-notice policy decisions. It is necessary to consider: Is the message suitable for the addressee, and does it strike the right tone? Is it understandable? Does it articulate any important point? Does it distinguish itself from the countless other messages communicated within the arena by a unique selling point?

Even if all the requirements are met, it must be borne in mind that communication in the direction of politics and administration suffers from a massive bottleneck problem. Around 40% of all documents addressed to central decision-

makers are lost on the way or do not reach the addressees. E-mails fall victim to screening by employees, postal items go unread to the wastepaper basket, documents are incorrectly sorted or filed, etc. And even if messages reach the intended addressee processing times are extremely long, especially in state institutions and authorities. As a result of rigid line organization and complex filing systems, a single file within a ministry sometimes passes through 100 hands; and at each stage, there is a real risk that it will be permanently put to one side. In this context, perseverance and a high tolerance for frustration are necessary.

The bottleneck problem on the addressee side corresponds to the problem of a communicative oversupply on the sender side. The sheer number of think tanks, foundations, agencies, law firms, political consultancies etc. in national capitals leads to a massive and highly accelerated competition for attention, which has to be faced on a daily basis (see also our discussion of the struggle for communicative recognition in Chapters 2.5.2 and 3.2.1.). According to current estimates, between 23,000 and 40,000 professional lobbyists are romping about in Washington.⁴⁰ In his study of 2017, Andreas Schieder determines, by means of comparison, that over 10,000 persons are employed in the political services sector in Berlin alone (agencies, consulting firms, individual consultants, law firms and ‘other service providers’).⁴¹ This figure does not include the non-profit sector, associations or similar protagonists of corporatist interest intermediation. This competitive situation reinforces the relevance of the thematic content of the USP, as discussed in Chapter 3.3.1, a matter which the homo consultants and the homo consultandus have to work out and communicate together. If this fails, influencing will fail simply by virtue of the law of large numbers.

Nevertheless, political influencing not only involves the technical and organizational implementation of empowerment and condensing. As we discussed in Chapter 2.5.2, practical experience (response to an event, successful mobilization or the failure of a campaign, the regulatory influence of a position paper, the sustainability of internal restructuring, etc.) must be continuously reflected upon and evaluated: What has been achieved and when? With what effort? What worked and what did not work? And so on. Answering these questions not only serves to ensure success for homo consultandus and his or her allies. Above all, it has the function of further improving the understanding of the board in power chess,

40 Cf. Herschel, Thomas F. and LaPira, Timothy M. (2017): How Many Lobbyists Are in Washington? Shadow Lobbying and the Gray Market for Policy Advocacy, *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 6 (3), pp. 199-214.

41 Cf. Schieder, Andreas (2017): *Kommerzielles Lobbying und Public Affairs-Management*, Wiesbaden: Springer VS.; p. 514.

strengthening the political position analysis, honing strategic powers, eliminating deficits and finally optimizing future strategy development.

Influencing is therefore always a learning process, the results of which flow into perfecting the first two guiding principles. Accordingly, the principles of the power leadership curriculum – empowering, condensing and influencing – do not form a chronological order but a complex of interdependent factors. The evaluation of success, which links practical influencing back to preliminary questions on coaching, training, monitoring, intelligence, stakeholder mapping, etc., does not have the character of a quantitative study. Political influence can hardly be captured in exact and replicable data. Therefore, quantitative surveys on strategy implementation (number of quarterly policy formats, meetings with stakeholders, feedback on letters, etc.) are at best inconclusive and, at worst, misleading. For these reasons, the focus is on the qualitative measuring of results. Thus the power consultant does not recount the number of conversations he or she has held with parliamentarians, but rather explains how the content of the discussions has affected the overall strategy of advocacy. At this point, sometimes the working methods of consultant and client collide – especially with companies that are accustomed to measuring progress through key performance indicators (i.e., metrics such as spending, revenue, leads or click rates). Again, the power consultant has no alternative but to tackle the tightrope walk between rebellion and humility. On the one hand, the client’s criteria of success must be reflected in the consultant’s work, but on the other hand the peculiarities of the political field – in particular the impossibility of quantifying influence – must be made clear. Only if this mediation succeeds can the experiences won from influencing be used to sustainably optimize the common power strategy of homo consultandus and homo consultants.

3.5 GLOBAL GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Now that the three guiding principles – empower, condense and influence – have been expanded upon, let us return to a core topic already discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3 that has since accompanied us implicitly: the challenge that globalization creates for the power leader curriculum. The twenty-first century is an era of international networking – both political and economic, informational and technological – and supranational legislation, such as in the EU. On such a playing field, the political and economic interests of the homo consultandus are often no longer limited to a single community. Mutual transnational interdependencies mean that domestic events (changes of government, coalition negotiations,