

but the Minister will need to know who this person is, what is happening in their country, how the two countries are linked, and, above all, what are the messages the Minister would best convey.

What do you say? This is a tricky part in that suggesting speaking points can be sometimes stilted unless you keep an ear to how the Minister speaks. Often the Minister's staff will provide direction, sometimes at a very granular level. The question the drafter must ask is "Do we know how she likes to state things?" with experience this comes more readily. However, this question must have two answers:

- What is our communications/messaging objective: For instance, there is a significant strategic objective between the reader being in the position of listening and consulting with a familiar person or group just to keep up to date and hear from them and the reader having to defend a new policy initiative that has gathered a lot of unhappy opponents.
- What do I say? Speaking notes should be real. They should be human. They should be written to speak not written to be read aloud. Ideally, they will be in the voice of the user of the briefing note. Above all, they should be devoid of jargon,

Sample of a Meeting Briefing Note

Briefing Note

Ministerial Meeting with the Association of Credit Unions of
New Brunswick

Issues and Current Government Position

The ACUNB has informed officials that it will raise several issues with the Minister. This chart lists them with the current government position.

ACUNB Issue	Government Position
The need to alter the monthly reporting of basic statistics to a quarterly basis. This is seen by the ACUNB as a cost-saving measure.	This would reduce oversight on the credit unions. However, the proposal has not been analyzed, especially with respect to what other provinces are doing and the implications of federal regulations. We could follow up if you wished.
ACUNB is seeking Government funding for a leadership development program to encourage the recruitment of new managers.	There is no program that could fund this. This idea has broader implications for other industries as well.
The ACUNB wants regulations changed to make it easier for credit unions to amalgamate into regional entities.	This is the major issue for the ACUNB. Smaller credit unions are feeling the pressure of population and industry shrinkage. They see themselves as being more viable as regional entities. The Ministry is researching this idea and will have a policy paper for the Minister within the next three months.

Suggested Speaking Points

General Opening:

1. We value a continued relationship with the ACUNB.
2. Credit unions are important in our communities. We want to keep them operating in as many communities as possible.
3. I look forward to our discussions.

Quarterly Reporting:

1. I am prepared to give this some thought.
2. I will need to understand the implications better.
3. I also want to know how the other provinces do this.
4. I am not prepared to weaken our oversight role, but I recognize that times are changing, and we might be able to adapt.

5. My officials will work with you on this.

Funding for Leadership Training:

1. This is a tricky one for us. If we do this, what about other industries facing the very same issue.
2. Right now, the Government has no program for this.
3. The Ministry cannot act along on this. Perhaps you could develop this further, on a government level.

Amalgamation:

1. We see the issue. This is a very real problem.
2. We want credit union services in as many communities as possible.
3. I appreciate your discussions with officials on it.
4. We are following up on them and are working on some policy ideas.
5. We will keep you involved.

General Closing:

1. Let's keep talking.
2. Your input is valuable to us.
3. I believe we share values about credit unions, and you understand our need to assure the public of effective oversight.
4. My officials will be following up with you on the issues you raised here today.

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