

Mike Pertschuk

From 1966-1970, Mike Pertschuk served as Consumer Counsel (later Staff Director and Chief Counsel) to the Democratic Majority of the US Senate Committee on Commerce. In that capacity, he was charged with shepherding through the Senate (and Senate-House Conferences) the series of landmark consumer protection, public health, and environmental law that marked the high point in public interest legislation for the last half of the 20th century. To achieve these successes, Pertschuk learned from and collaborated with Ralph Nader and other innovative consumer advocates to develop and implement a strategic communications strategy that counteracted the intense opposition of the corporate lobbies and pro-corporate legislators.

In 1977, Pertschuk was named by President Carter as Chair of the FTC with a mandate to enforce many of these laws. In the face of a growing tide of anti-regulatory fervor, Pertschuk, as Chair, pursued a series of aggressive regulatory initiatives, including his proposed rule banning all advertising targeted to children. Again, he developed and pursued a communication strategy which helped prevent the lobby-inflamed Congress from weakening the FTC's broad powers.

In 1984, along with David Cohen, former President of Common Cause, Pertschuk created the Advocacy Institute, to build the capacity of citizen groups to advocate policies in the public interest. Central to the Institute's work over the next 20 years was the training of 100's of community based advocates in "Media Advocacy" (a concept and term credited to Pertschuk), the techniques developed to enable citizen groups with limited resources, effectively to challenge corporate adversaries in the mass media.

He has written more than 20 guides on media advocacy and 4 books on effective –and ineffective – strategies for citizen advocacy, especially media advocacy. He is a founding Board member of The Frameworks Institute and an advisor to Environics Strategic Initiatives Forum.