

Amplifying the Influence of Community Planners



Recent Headlines

- Townships, road commission struggle for answers to crumbling roads – *Muskegon Chronicle, October 9th*
- Taylor shuts down two of three fire stations – *Detroit Free Press, October 4th*
- Genesee County commissioners approve new budget, prepare for fallout of cuts – *Flint News, September 28th*

How do key leaders in your community make decisions?

- Who are they?
- What do they value?
- What process challenges must they overcome?

Challenges Faced by Decision Makers



What are you selling?

- Place making
- Sustainability
- Affordable Housing
- Diversity
- Inclusiveness
- Environmental Sensitivity
- Comprehensive Planning
- Urban Design
- Efficient Transportation Systems

What are you selling?

Harvard Business Review – 5 types of sales rep

1. Relationship builders
2. Hard workers
3. Lone wolves
4. Reactive problem solvers
5. Challengers

What are you selling?

Harvard Business Review – 5 types of sales rep

Most successful are Challengers who:

use their deep understanding of their customers' business to push their thinking and take control of the sales conversation. They're not afraid to share even potentially controversial views and are assertive — with both their customers and bosses

What are you selling?

Harvard Business Review – 5 types of sales rep

Challengers:

- **teach their customers** – new \$ saving ideas
- **tailor the message** – tuned in to customer objectives
- **control the message** – assertive but not aggressive
comfortable with tension, won't cave to every customer demand, able to push the message home

What do we offer?

FIVE KEYS

1. Competitive Advantage for Investment
2. Self-Determination
3. Transparency
4. Community Engagement
5. Litigation Avoidance

1 - Competitive Advantage

- Planning is one of few public sector activities that focuses on, and facilitates, top line growth.
- Businesses value predictability and planners can chart a clear path through regulatory processes.
- What other public departments have a better “catchers view” of the field and are better positioned to be responsive to investment?

2 - Self-Determination

- Planners don't dictate, they enable...
- Planners can help the community, and its leaders, articulate a clear vision of its future.
- Who else can distill competing views on broad public policy positions into actionable plans?

3 - Transparency

We serve the public interest – AICPA Code of Ethics

Our primary obligation is to serve the public interest and we, therefore, owe our allegiance to a conscientiously attained concept of the public interest that is formulated through continuous and open debate. We shall achieve high standards of professional integrity, proficiency, and knowledge.

4 - Community Engagement

- Planners reach out to solicit opinions about the community.
- Planners address concerns of specific interests such as neighborhoods, bicyclists, urban farmers, etc.
- Planners facilitate dialogue between opposing points of view

5 - Litigation Avoidance

- Communities can ill afford to dedicate scarce resources to litigation
- Ongoing law suits can present a negative image of a community
- Payment of damages to private parties borne out of failure to follow the law is viewed scornfully by citizens

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

- If you fail to tell your story someone else will gladly do it for you.
- In addressing conflict, if you are explaining you are losing.

Tell your story



Tell your story

- MSNBC.com
- onlineWSJ.com
- mnn.com
- Digitaljournal.com
- hypoallergenicdogs.net
- latimesblogs.com
- Boston.com
- therealowner.com



If you're explaining you're losing

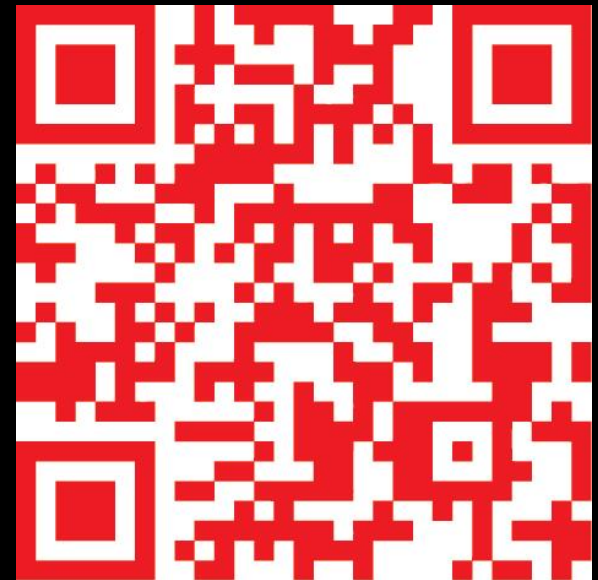
- D'Oh
- Come On Down
- Man Up
- Big Oil
- Media Firestorm
- Wall Street v Main Street

If you're explaining you're losing

- John Greening, associate professor at Northwestern University's journalism school, : “It used to be that the most valuable thing on the planet was time, but now the most valuable thing is attention.”
- Advertisers use of 15 second commercials up 70%
- University professors are advised to break content into 10 to 15 minute chunks for best retention

If you're explaining you're losing

- Become the QR code of your organization
- Talk less but say more



The Midland Value Proposition

- The tax bill tale
- Flowers
- Public Involvement

What is your Value Proposition?

- Listen and the target audience will tell you what they want and need.
- How can you improve the life of the target audience?
- What evidence or guarantee can you provide that you will deliver the promised results?
- What makes your solution a better choice than the alternative?

What gets in our way?

