Community Relations & Public Participation
Community

- A group of people living in the same place or having particular characteristics in common.
- A feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goal.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Community Relations as a practice can be defined as the methods used to establish and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship within the community.
Why is Community Relations important to businesses?
Founded a foundation 1977 8 years after opening first store that is dedicated to creating opportunities for everyone

Employees from around the world volunteered over 450,000 hours to improve their local communities.

Invests in 2 signature programs – This Way Ahead paid internship where young people who are selected from local non-profits and get real on the job experience as part of a paid summer internship

Women focused program developed to improve women's opportunities at home and at work through tracked assessments like improved communication skills, self-confidence, and productivity

Has touched millions of lives through partnerships with nonprofits all over the globe.
In 1996, invested $10 million to:

- Setup LOAN Funds to entrepreneurs
- Provided technical training for local students
- Established centers for pregnant and nursing mothers
Their programs are designed to build positive relationships within the community.
They demonstrate involvement to community concerns and issues.
They design and implement programs that improve the community’s quality of life.
• Well planned projects begin with relationship mapping and building

• The bigger the project the more relationships you will usually need as a foundation

• During your planning stage, build in time to develop the relationship
Fundamental reasons to Build relationships
Community Building occurs one to one
We need relationships to win allies to support our causes
Our relationships give meaning and purpose to work and our lives.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS: HOW DO YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Where to begin, who to involve
• Build relationships one at a time:
  No shortcuts to authentic relationships.

• Be friendly and make a connection.
  Don’t underestimate the power of a smile.

• Ask people questions
  This is your opportunity to learn, so listen attentively.

• Tell people about yourself
  • Trust is gained when you are transparent
Go places and do things
You have to go to where people are to build relationships

Accept people the way they are.
Agreement is not a requirement in building relationships.

Overcome the fear of rejection
Embrace the fact that it will happen.

Be persistent
• It takes a while to win trust
• Invite people to get involved
  Most people are drawn to being a part of something big!

• Find enjoyment in people
  Quirky, opinionated, shy – if you genuinely enjoy people others will be attracted to your attitude and more likely will want to be around you and support your efforts
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
PUBLIC IS DEFINED AS:

Of or concerning the people as a whole.

Ordinary people in general: the community.

You can refer to people in general or to all the people in a particular country or community as the public.
A political principle or practice

- Recognized as a right.
- Any process that directly engages the public in decision-making and gives full consideration to public input in making that decision.
- Is often part of a process not a single event.
- The process by which an organization consults with interested or affected individual(s) and government entities before making a decision.
- Intended to be two-way communication and collaborative problem solving with the goal of achieving better and more acceptable decisions.
So, what’s the point?

I have a Question!
WE GIVE YOU WINNING SUPPORT
Smart corporate real estate managers and property developers have discovered that winning local approval for their new, tax-paying, job-creating, profit-making projects is no longer possible without first building public support at the grassroots level.
WINNING
UNDERSTANDING THE “LANDSCAPE”

• 72% of Americans prefer the status quo rather than new construction in their communities.

• Most likely NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) opponents of any new development are:
  • 55 to 74 years-old
  • home-owning
  • college-educated
  • politically-independent
  • high-earning individuals — the residents with the most local political clout to get something stopped.
Polling data also shows that those who are:
- less educated
- less wealthy, and
- who live in rental housing

are MORE likely to support new development.

Those supporters are less passionate than opponents and therefore are less likely to participate in the approval process.
WINNING
UNDERSTANDING THE “LANDSCAPE”

SO WHAT HAPPENS?

• The vocal opponents move to block.
• Less-passionate supporters fail to attend public hearings and other meetings in the approval process.
• Politicians assume everyone hates the project.
WINNING

DO THE WORK BEFORE THE “WORK”

Treat your projects as if it was political candidate running for office.

Developing a campaign to identify, educate, organize, and mobilize supporters must be waged from the start.

First, reach out to neighbors.

Utilize social media and virtual meeting platforms

Residents appreciate the efforts of developers who take the time to explain their plans and solicit feedback.
WINNING
BE METHODICAL: AVOID THE “RUSH”

Avoid big community meetings like it’s a disease with no cure!

Supporters v. Opposition in the same forum

“Entire Community Opposes Project”
WINNING

BE STRATEGIC

• Start with one-on-one meetings:
  • far more productive!

• Offer a less contentious atmosphere for productive discussions with those who may be impacted.

• C.E.O. (Communicate Early and Often)
  • No one wants to be the first to learn about a project by reading about it in the newspaper, or worse, hearing about it from the opponents.
## Winning

**Be Strategic**

### Chicago City Council

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<th>District</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
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*Note: This table is a simplified representation of the Chicago City Council members.*
WINNING
IT’S A PROCESS

Engage the opposition:
- Listen and understand their concerns.
- Develop strategies that mitigate concerns.

Cultivate supporters living nearest project site first.

Those who will directly benefit:
- Potential employees
- Land seller
- Local small businesses

Those who will indirectly benefit:
- Teachers/parents schools will gain a larger budget from increased tax base.
WINNING
IT’S A MARATHON NOT A SPRINT

Maintain Communication (C.E.O.)

Keep track of all contact information and ways they can assist:
- Attend a meeting
- Send a letter
- Post a yard sign
- Utilize various social media platforms
- Email or write their officials

Mobilize your support groups:
- Attend open forums
- Town meetings
COMMUNITY
RELATIONS & PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

SUMMARY

Winning Support
Understand the landscape
Do the work before the work
Be methodical; avoid the rush
Be strategic
It’s a process not an event
Treat like a marathon not a sprint
Engage community through relationship building
Thank you