

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

- Recognized early that if the full POTENTIAL of the Golden Gate National Parks was to be realized, its FOUNDATIONS would need to be built on a different PARADIGM or model.
- * I love the agency I work for, and strongly embrace both the mission of the National Park Service and its strong set of core values. However, its more traditional culture (borne from its military origin) of
 - COMMAND and CONTROL and
 - Best way to ACCOMPLISH WORK was to do things YOURSELF

SIMPLY would not get us where we needed to be.
- * Culture built more on control, not EMPOWERMENT; structured on a COMPETITIVE, not a COLLABORATIVE model.
- * Prevailing philosophy within NPS in past – isolate and protect parks from what many considered
 - parochial community interests
 - short term agendas
 - unhealthy community interference
 - local issues not central to our work
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- * Boundary was more than a PHYSICAL boundary – it was a SOCIAL one as well
- * At GOLDEN GATE, it was our intent to change this --- to put in place a different paradigm of THINKING and ACTION.
- * Ultimate objective ---- build a stronger public CONSTITUENCY that UNDERSTANDS NPS mission and the resource values of Golden Gate as a unit of the National Park System –
- * AND, that individuals and groups/organizations are able to CONNECT to these values in a PERSONAL way by how we carry out our work.
- * So, what does a community building process look like – what are the BUILDING BLOCKS

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

1. FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS – human nature of people
2. ABUNDANCE THEORY - everyone potential supporter
3. FACILITATE, RATHER THAN DOING YOURSELF
4. SETTING COMPELLING VISION – raising the bar of expectations
5. POSITIONING IN THE MARKET PLACE – marketing and communication
6. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS – key to community building
7. CYCLE OF FRIEND-RAISING – a comprehensive approach to engagement
8. DIVERSIFYING AND LEVERAGING FUNDS – building a stronger and more secure funding structure
9. IMPORTANCE OF A PRINCIPAL NON-PROFIT PARTNER
10. ORGANIZATION ALIGNMENT – aligning organization around constituency building model.

I think after we have had an opportunity to explore each of these components, you hopefully will appreciate the importance of having a comprehensive engagement strategy in order to build a stronger constituent and funding base for your organization.

This is not WHAT you DO when you finish your CORE work

It is HOW you APPROACH getting your PRIORITY work accomplished.

Now, lets explore each of these components -- see how they tie together in an overall engagement strategy.

1. FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

PEOPLE give to PEOPLE

FUNDS follow FRIENDS

FRIENDS follow ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT follows EXPOSURE

EXPOSURE follows understanding that people GIVE to and SUPPORT those things they connect to at both an INTELLECTUAL and EMOTIONAL level.

* What we DO is only as important as people THINK it is

* Boils down to simple question of who knows WHO we ARE, WHAT we DO, WHO we SERVE and WHY its important.

* Growing recognition that CONNECTING people to park values is perhaps the most important NEED if we are to capture further POLITICAL and FINANCIAL support.

- * Political realities – elected officials, regardless of their political party or political beliefs, are inclined to SUPPORT what their constituencies consider important.
- * The BROADER and DEEPER the spectrum of support, the stronger likely will be the political and financial base.
- * Its all about NETWORKING and RELATIONSHIP building – or FRIEND-RAISING as I like to refer to it.
- * Its about making CONNECTIONS at an emotional level that translates to OWNERSHIP of a set of values – being a STAKEHOLDER of those values.
- * WHAT one does not UNDERSTAND, one will not VALUE
WHAT one does not VALUE, one will not PROTECT
Or put another way
WHAT you LOVE, you CARE for
WHAT you CARE for, you learn to LOVE

2. ABUNDANCE THEORY

- * CONCEPT that everyone in the broader community is a potential supporter – every INDIVIDUAL, every BUSINESS, every ORGANIZATION.
- * Notion that every community – no matter how large or small – has an ABUNDANCE of TALENT ----- all you have to do is open up a phone book to see what is potentially available to you.
- * Do community TALENT, or asset MAPPING --- connect the specific needs you may have with resources in the community potentially able to help – importance of being strategic
- * Concept of expanding the PIE, not COMPETING for the same size pie
- * Understand concept of GIVING BACK to community – everyone gives certain percentage of their discretionary time back to help the community they live in.
- * Discuss GIVING patterns of businesses and individuals ---- need to become the organization of choice for donation of time, expertise, and money.
- * Success can occur anywhere ---- matter of scale
- * If time allows do fictitious DRIVE through a typical COMMUNITY – stopping at each business or address to identify the potential link between that entity/person and a need of your organization.

3. FACILITATE, RATHER THAN DOING YOURSELF

- * If the business you are in is building constituency, then one needs to see ourselves not so much as the “DOERS” of the work but as the “FACILITATOR, BROKER, or CONVENOR” of how the abundant talent of the community is tapped to get important work accomplished.
- * This concept CHALLENGES most agencies ways of getting work done – its more normal practices ---- perhaps its prevailing culture.
- * At Golden Gate, I like to say that every time we do something ourselves, it is a LOST OPPORTUNITY for COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ----- I overstate this on purpose in order to reinforce the thinking essential to success in a community building model.
- * GOAL is to maximize ability of community to CONNECT, and the staff’s OPENNESS to RECEIVE.
- * Need to understand the BEHAVIORS and COMPETENCIES essential for success

4. DEFINING COMPELLING VISION – RAISING THE BAR OF EXPECTATIONS

- * Cite John F. Kennedy example when in 1961 he stood before the American people and said he was going to send a man to the moon and return him safely. At the time, he was admonished by some members of his senior team and was ridiculed quite vociferously by the press because he did not have answers to how he was going to accomplish this. This in no way deterred him. Standing before the American people watching on TV he stood back and calmly said

“NOW THAT THE VISION IS SET, THE ANSWERS WILL BE FOUND.”

Of course, history served this vision well. This one statement has had a PROFOUND impact in my life and work. No matter what work initiative or project I may be working on, this statement keeps coming back to me. It INSPIRES me to want to explore a more LOFTY AMBITION --- one that can attract excitement in others.

Repeat “Now that the VISION is set, the ANSWERS will be found.”

- *Relate Susan Clark story

(The National Park Foundation was coming out to San Francisco to present its pedigree to the San Francisco funding community. The invitation to attend was sent out by David Rockefeller, Jr., the vice chair of the Foundation. Given David’s good reputation, there was excellent attendance by the executives of the various foundations. The presentations given by David and Jim Matty, President of the NPF

were well done. Well into the dialogue that followed, Susan Clark (President, Columbia Foundation) and no shrinking violet, ask an important rhetorical question to the National Park Service representatives attending the meeting. She said, Brain, John, and Rob, help me understand something. When I visit a National Park, I would think that the very best practices were in place and I was learning through them, and being inspired by them. FOR EXAMPLE,

- If I were visiting Yosemite National Park, I would think that the very best in WATER CONSERVATION was in place and where ever I went I was learning different concepts and being inspired by what I could take home and apply in my own situation.
- If I were visiting Yellowstone National Park, I would think that the very best in ENERGY CONSERVATION was in place and where ever I went I was learning different concepts and being inspired by what I could take home and apply in my own situation.
- If I were visiting Rocky Mountains National Park, I would see the very best in TRAIL CONSTRUCTION in place --- trails aligned in a matter that was sensitive to the environment in which they traversed, new technologies in use of geo-web, etc. in place and I was learning from these experiences and being inspired to apply them in the trail work being done in my local community.

Susan was on a roll and concluded by saying she could never remember having a HEALTHY MEAL in a national park. What an IMPACT these comments had on me. She was setting a different VISION for what national parks could mean to the American people. She was raising the bar of expectations – re-positioning the organization

* People like to be associated with SUCCESS, with EXCELLENCE

5. BUILDING COMMUNITY AWARENESS – POSITIONING IN THE MARKET PLACE

* Our PARKS are PLACES of high PURPOSE

PLACES TO CONNECT
PLACES TO BE ACTIVE
PLACES TO EXCITE OUR IMAGINATIONS
PLACES TO DISCOVER
PLACES TO LEARN
PLACES TO VOLUNTEER

* We are in the business of public purpose. Hopefully, each of us strives to make our Parks and Park Systems as well KNOWN and LOVED as other cherished public ASSETS --- CIVIC ENDEAVORS.

- As BASIC as SCHOOLS
- As ESSENTIAL as LIBRARIES
- As NECESSARY as HOSPITALS
- As VALUABLE as CLEAN AIR AND WATER
- As CULTURALLY important as SYMPHONY HALLS, OPERA HOUSES, and MUSEUMS.

* SEEKING to ACHIEVE from a well-developed STRATEGY of

- RESEARCH AND SURVEYS
- COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
- BRANDING AND IMAGE BUILDING
- COMMITMENT TO DEEPENED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
- DEEPLY – CONNECTED FORMS OF PUBLIC STEWARDSHIP

* As each of you recognize, PARKS need to be seen as an INTEGRAL part of, not apart from communities

* Importance of developing a MESSAGING ARCHITECTURE

- WHAT WE BELIEVE
- WHO WE ARE
- WHY WE'RE NEEDED
- WHAT OUR GOAL
- WHAT WE DO
- HOW WE DO IT
- WHY NOW?

* Describe approach to lining up PRO BONO talent to assist with any initiative – use MARKETING “dream” team as example.

- DETERMINE WHAT IS NEEDED
- IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TALENTS NEEDED
- IDENTIFY COMMUNITY PEOPLE WITH DESIRED EXPERTISE
- DEVELOP STRATEGY TO GET THEM TO YES
- INSPIRE THEM TO DO MORE

6. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS – A KEY TO COMMUNITY

BUILDING

* I have spent last two decades EXPLORING, EXPERIMENTING, and TESTING new ideas, trying to understand all DIMENTIOS of PARTNERSHIPS.

- * How and with whom to FORM them
- How to MANAGE them
- How to RETROFIT or RESCUE them
- How to implement EXIT STRATEGIES when needed

- *Looked at BARRIERS --- ATTITUDINAL
 - CULTURAL
 - PROCESS
 - POLICY
 - LEGISLATIVE

- * Looked at CAPACITY building
 - Park's capacity to understand TENETS of good partnering
 - Community's capacity to CONNECT and HELP

- * Identified some 21 Partnership SUCCESS factors – If all were in place on a sustained basis for any partnership, success would almost be guaranteed

- * However, its extremely rare to ever see a Partnership in full ALIGNMENT with these success factors.

- * Importance of being PROACTIVE in partnership work --- Partnerships are a means of getting your organization's important work done.

- * Refer to handouts on Partnership success factors.

7. CYCLE OF FRIEND-RAISING OR THE INCREMENTAL HOOK

- * DESCRIBE CYCLE of FRIEND-RAISING (This is an incremental process of ever deepening engagement that leads ultimately to an individual, business or organization identifying with and supporting the work of your organization. It starts with

EXPOSURE and how you pro-actively manage that first contact and exposure to your work. It then moves to creating an UNDERSTANDING of the importance of something and, then, through that understanding you create a CARING about a value, a thing, a project, an initiative. From caring about something you have come to value, you then get COMMITMENT and from committing to action, you eventually get a desire to ADVOCATE

- * Lets then bring this process to life by going through a series of real life examples.

- * Engagement strategy can be directed at:

- AN INDIVIDUAL

- A CORPORATION
- A PUBLIC AGENCY OR INSTITUTION
- A NON-PROFIT ENTITY
- A FOUNDATION
- AT A PROJECT LEVEL
- AT AN INITIATIVE LEVEL

* Select 2 or 3 from following list: The Gap, Inc.; Boy Scout Troop 33; Boston Consulting Group; Garden Conservancy; Oceana High School; Walter and Elise Haas, Jr. Fund; Oracle; and Nike Missile Site.

* Start with The Gap, Inc. Since The Gap, Inc is headquartered in San Francisco, it is logical that you would want to include them among many corporations you would want to get engaged with our work at Golden Gate.

Corporations like to do community service work – particularly work that allows management and employees to work side-by-side. It is good for team building. We have found site restoration projects to work particularly well. If you do not already have an individual that has a good entrée with the company you wish to contact, most firms have an Office of Community Affairs or a contact person with a similar title. This is a good place to start. Your first task is to interest them in doing a volunteer project. Prepare your messaging points carefully.

In selecting your first project for the initial EXPOSURE stage of your engagement strategy, there are five key elements to keep in mind.

First, you need to select a project that reasonably can be accomplished in 3-4 hours. This is the normal time available for work when considering travel time and employee work schedules. The project selected should lend itself to successful results with this level of time commitment.

Second, there needs to be good organization of the project. This means the tools necessary for all tasks are on site and the work tasks have been broken down in a manner that allows for easy assignment to the number of volunteers involved with the work. Remember, they are evaluating whether you have your ACT together and whether they would want to return to provide other support.

Third, is the education messaging. Since your goal is not a one time event but a longer engagement process, you need to think carefully about what you want them to learn through this experience – its about setting the HOOK – getting the

volunteers to gain some initial understanding of your organization or a special appreciation of the importance of (or the science behind) the resource they are stewarding.

Fourth, breaking bread around volunteer work is vital. Plan to have beverages and

some goodies to help celebrate the occasion. Remember, its not just about the work. Its about networking and building relationships. This becomes increasingly important as you go deeper into the engagement process.

Lastly, it about the THANK YOUS. Find a number of ways to say thanks. If done well, you have an excellent start on a longer term engagement strategy. If you have done this well, the group will indicate its possible interest in doing a future work party. Follow up – Do not let them off the hook.

You now are ready for the SECOND STEP in the engagement process. You can pick another different kind of restoration project, a trail project, or something else that easily lends itself to a volunteer work party. Follow the same five-step process with the exception of the education messaging. You will want to provide other messaging – ig. inviting a specialist or scientist to give a talk related to the work they are doing. The objective is to deepen the learning and excite further interest.

At this point, you have made some inroads and you are ready for the THIRD STEP of engagement. This usually involves tapping into the expertise of the company with whom you are working. In The Gap, Inc. example, it was obvious. We run a number of retail operations through the Park’s non-profit partner (Golden Gate National Park Conservancy). The Gap, Inc. is in the retail business running over 4000 stores throughout the country. The easiest thing to ask anyone for is their expertise. We wanted to tap into the company’s retail expertise to improve our product marketing, customer services, approaches to displaying merchandise and the location of our points of sale. Given our developing relationship, we had a ready in to management. They responded favorably to our ask and provided a top internal team to do an audit of the Park’s retail operations. This resulted in a report. We responded quickly with positive changes to our operations. This responsiveness pleased the company.

Having completed this phase of engagement, The Gap, Inc. had developed a good UNDERSTANDING of the Park and was deepening its CARING about what the Park contributed to the “quality of life” in the S.F. Bay Area.

Golden Gate was preparing to celebrate the opening of Fort Baker, a new addition to the Park just to the north of the Golden Gate Bridge. We wanted to welcome the public to this new site with a large “March for Parks.” This seemed to be an excellent opportunity to advance our partnership with The Gap, Inc. We first approached the company with the concept of providing volunteer event day monitors. Over 200 employees signed up to volunteer. We also wanted a beautiful tee-shirt to commemorate the day. Since The Gap is in the apparel business, it seemed logical to ask them if they were willing to produce a signature shirt for the occasion. They said YES. By this juncture, the company was in the event so far, we asked if they just wanted to go the next step and become the corporate sponsor for the event. They said yes and a great time was had by all and a deeper partnership formed.

The FINAL STEP involved a \$34 million capital campaign to raise private money to transform the of the Presidio of San Francisco waterfront – known as Crissy Field. It probably would not surprise you to learn that significant financial contributions towards this project came from The Gap Foundation, from a number of company executives, and, importantly many smaller checks from company employees.

This, then , completes the cycle of FRIEND-RAISING. The Gap, Inc., through its employees, continues to embrace the mission of the Park and the values it brings to the community. They stand ready to help ADVOCATE on the Park’s behalf.

- * Every individual, organization, business, or foundation is a potential supporter similar to The Gap. In deciding where to place one’s time and energy, it is important to be both pro-active and strategic.

What are your priority park system needs that are suited to outside engagement opportunities?

Do you organize engagement around a project, an initiative, or special program or do you develop your engagement around specific individuals, businesses, agencies, organizations or foundations?

What pressing needs might lend themselves to a partnership approach – or interesting collaboration?

Who are the potential partner(s) you might consider to take on each initiative?

What components of the community might you want to develop engagement strategies to achieve specific political or organizational objectives?

What elements of your work could be enhanced with special expertise available in the local community?

Over time, the goal is to INCREMENTALLY EXTEND your reach into all elements of the community. Each specific engagement – each relationship building process – moves you one step further towards this goal. It is like THROWING a STONE into a placid pond and seeing the ripples extend out from the core.

8. DIVERSIFYING YOUR SOURCES OF FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT

- * Everything discussed so far in relationship building, network building, and community building set the stage for a comprehensive business plan. I refer to it as STEWARDSHIP INVESTMENT STRATEGY.
- * Describe the EIGHT component elements of the stewardship investment strategy. (REFER TO HANDOUT)

- Agency principal funding source
- Other public funding
- Revenue generation
- Cost reimbursements / cost recovery
- Partnerships

- Volunteer Management
- Private philanthropy
- Management efficiencies

- * Discuss concepts around LEVERAGING of FUNDS
- * Discuss concepts around EARNED vs. CONTRIBUTED income

9. IMPORTANCE OF A PRINCIPAL NON-PROFIT ENTITY

- * Discuss importance of a principal partner to do things that are difficult for government to do or get public support behind government entities performing
- * Creating a unified, seamless partnership (clarity of roles)
- * Cite Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy as example
- * Importance of creating a sustainable funding stream (earned and contributed income)

10. ORGANIZATION ALIGNMENT

- * Emphasize fact that a collaborative, constituency model requires one to reinvent ones organization.
- * Discuss need to build internal infrastructure for success
- * Discuss culture change – previously said it occurred one retirement at a time – I do not have patience for this – now understand it must be pursued one person at a time. One can not dictate or direct change. People need to see the benefits themselves and change because they can see the VALUE ADDED to their work by tapping into other people’s energy and talent. Discuss the process of change – illustrate with a couple of examples (Terri Thomas and John Porter)
- * Discuss need to restructure positions – cite examples
 - Zone garden concept with the Central Park Conservancy (Central Park in New York) – illustrate with horticulture positions – Hire for Attitude, train for skill - Hire for 5 basic competencies
 - Zone stewardship positions at Area A of the Presidio of San Francisco (Golden Gate National Parks)
 - Trail positions within Golden Gate National Parks
 - Site stewardship position at Nike Missile Site (Golden Gate National Parks)
- * Discuss concept of RELATIONSHIP MANAGERS

- Establish expectations for what a “relationship manager” is expected to do, fill the collateral duty assignments competitively throughout organization, and develop specific language covering assignments for inclusion in employee position descriptions.
- Cite examples at Golden Gate (Facility Program partners, Ocean Beach, City of Pacifica, Village of Stinson Beach, Muir Beach community)

So, in conclusion , here are important concepts to remember

- * People support those things they know about and can connect with at both an intellectual and emotional level
- * There is an abundance of resources available in every community and everyone is a potential supporter of your work – be aggressive in your networking and relationship building
- * Start every important project or initiative with a compelling vision for what is to be achieved
- * Set a high bar of expectation – of excellence – but understand you achieve results one small step at a time
- * Expand your partnerships, collaborations and alliances. Be proactive and strategic in determining who to partner with to accomplish what priority work. Understand and continually apply the partnership success factors
- * Develop and implement a comprehensive community engagement strategy to build support for your organization
- * Build your positioning in the market place with high quality branding, communication and marketing approaches
- * Expand and diversify your funding through implementing a comprehensive investment strategy.
- * Be on a constant journey for best practice
- * Pride yourself in being a barrier buster
- * Be willing to transform your organization and staff responsibilities to align with a community building model
- * Be a passionate, caring leader but LEAD

POSTSCRIPT

If I had a magic wand and could change an agency's policies, processes, guidelines and underlying culture, I would want to align them under the philosophy of:

FLEXIBILITY	NOT	RIGILITY
ENCOURAGING/ STIMULATING	NOT	DISCOURAGING
INVENTING	NOT	PREVENTING
STREAMLINING/ NIMBLENESS	NOT	PROCESS OVERLOAD
CREATIVITY/ INNOVATION	NOT	SAMENES/ SAFENESS
YES, ITS POSSIBLE	NOT	NO, NO, NO –BEEN TRERE, TRIED IT
REASONED RISK TAKING	NOT	RISK ADVERSE
INCENTIVES	NOT	DISINCENTIVES
EMPOWERMENT	NOT	CONTROL
DECENTRALIZING DECISION- MAKING	NOT	CENTRALIZING APPROVAL PROCESSES
CELEBRATE SUCCESSES	NOT	OBSESSED WITH MIS-FIRES
THOU SHALLS	NOT	THOU SHALL NOTS