

The Importance of Community in Tourism




2001 Rural Tourism Development Conference

Many, Louisiana

November 8, 2001




Overview

- Know What You Want
 - Decide Who Gets to Play
 - Put Pot on Stove ...
 - Win Friends and Influence People
 - Share a Bigger Sandbox
 - Don't Let Folks Go Away Mad
 - Final Thoughts
- 



Knowing What You Want


Goals and Objectives

- Different people want different things
 - Preservation-minded developers or visitor friendly preservationists?
 - Is your mission tourism or education?
 - Arch has to encompass (“big tent”)
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Knowing What You Want

Goals and Objectives

- Need to articulate early
 - Elevator speech
 - Case statement
 - OK to change over time
 - Pioneers leave
 - Keep a written record
(rationale with decisions)
- 



Who Gets to Play


- Group dynamics
 - Grassroots vs. top-down (philosophy)
 - Levels and functions (practicality)





Who Gets to Play

Group dynamics

- Confronting professionally
 - Peer to peer
 - Process accountability
 - Knowledgeable decision-making
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Who Gets to Play

- Organization matters
 - Staff critically important in terms of pace
 - Need a home but live outside it
 - Planning is perpetual
 - Beyond initial success (e.g. March of Dimes)
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Put Pot on Stove...

- Difference between planning, selling and doing
(attracts different individuals)
 - Everything takes longer and is harder to do than you originally thought
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Put Pot on Stove...

- Think S:
strategy, sequence, scale
(pilot projects)
 - Align activity with right group/individual
 - Staff can be a blessing and a curse
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Put Pot on Stove...

- Business leadership cuts through it
 - Results-oriented (but is quickest best?)
 - Sometimes politically naïve
 - Beware conflicts of interest
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Winning Friends

- It's all politics (source of all support)
 - All politics is local
(vision + happy people = funding)
 - Future funding depends on how you spend what you have
- 




Winning Friends

- Invest in planning
 - Should have professional look
 - Think visually about what you want to do
 - Name-brand consultants
- 




Winning Friends

- Tell them you're great –
then live up to your reputation
 - Target part of project for early success
 - Thank your supporters and
let them share in the glory
- 




A Bigger Sandbox

- Network aggressively (conferences)
 - Learn from others with similar projects
 - Read journals/newsletters
 - Join associations (national/regional)
 - Seek collaborative opportunities
 - Tell your story to state leaders, media
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Staying Friends

- Keep a positive outlook –
glass is half full not half empty
 - Celebrate small achievements together
 - Manage creative tensions
 - Stand back periodically and assess
 - Realize sometimes you have to give to get
- 




Common Tensions

- Staff vs. volunteer
 - Central coordination vs. local autonomy
 - Fast vs. slow
 - Turtle and the hare
 - Truth vs. message
 - People from “off”
 - Money to plan vs. funds to do
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Hard-Won Truths

- 10% will never get the message
 - Noses bend easily out of shape and take forever to bend back
 - Ancient promises are not forgotten
 - You have something to sell even if everyone else tells you that you don't
 - Disagreement is healthy; silence is not
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Final Thoughts

- Ask for help
 - Keep generational perspective
 - Find humor where you can
 - Eat and enjoy fellowship
 - Remember how geese fly
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