Community Involvement and Engagement

or, They Spoke, We Listened

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Today…

- We have to reach out to get and stay engaged with our communities
- “Large Scale” active listening
- What they want not, not what we want
- Look at different ways

Doesn’t matter how, Just keep doing it
A Bit about CWPD

- 58,000
- Upper Middle Class suburb
- 2 Municipalities
- Primary customers, 25-40 moms w/ fam
- Program reach +/- 10%
- WTRC-Indoor; CWPD Outdoor

2014...W
Two bits of advice or caution...
Don’t believe your own blarney
Hey, look! A duck!

That’s not a duck. That’s a rabbit!
Don’t make plans to fit your paradigm
- CWPD Approach that worked!...and works
- Some out of the norm ideas
- CSPD back in 2009
- Design Thinking Process
We often skip over empathizing and defining and go straight to ideation.
● to contribute (ideas, information, or suggestions) to a project, discussion, etc.

  to occupy the attention or efforts of (a person or persons)
- Electronic Survey—Quick and easy
- *(Patterns, not answers)*
- Then, *doubt* and confirm...
  - Contracted experts
  - Focus groups
  - Interviews
  - Random sample survey

**CWPD 2015-16-17...**
1. Preserve & Expand Habitats and Ecosystems
2. Demonstrate Stewardship
3. Provide Programs to meet Demand
4. Park/Facility Amenities for Future
5. Continuously Engage Community
6. Improve Processes

What we heard
Strategic Planning

- Where are we now?
- What do we need to change, add, start?
- What’s most important?
- Schedule to get the wheels turning

Low hanging fruit

- What can be done right away?
How we delivered-Over and Over...

- Added programs
- Expanded camp capacity
- Added new pollinator gardens
- Pursued grants to add land
- Juggled staff responsibilities
What was the impact?

- CWPD-
  - More natural areas
  - New programs
  - Additional partners
  - Refreshed brand
  - Grant $$
  - 78.3%!

- More in tune with our community!
How else can you do more listening?
Outreach beyond the normal:
From Dannie Wilson’s 6 Methods to Try

- 1. Grocery Stores
- 2. Picnics in the Park
- 3. Be Fly on the Wall
- 4. Commissioners/Trustees/Council folks
- 5. Targeted Conversations (people “in the know”)
- 6. Get a seat at the Table (community groups)
- Took 20 Months to “find out” (CSPD 2025)
- Focus groups
- Input sessions
- Surveyed
- Went back and asked again and again
- *(Answers were consistent!)*

- 2010– Depths of Great Recession...
- 60% vote to issue $37M in Bonds
- No more, no less
Verify and Re-affirm

- Use Pictures
- Ask same questions in a different way
Design Thinking... new name, old approach (?)
What is Design Thinking?
6 steps in design thinking

- **Empathize:** Understand the people involved
- **Define:** Clarify the problem or want
- **Ideate:** e.g. Generate ideas with pictures; nominal group technique
- **Prototype:** e.g. Conceptual park drawings
- **Test:** Bring it back for a look-see
- **Implement:** Book it, Dan-o
Empathizing

WHAT could the park offer that a backyard does not?

WHO will/should use the site? (now & in the future)

How can the park BUILD COMMUNITY?

WHAT do we want to DO, or EXPERIENCE at this site?
Defining Program

PROGRAMMING THE SITE
Building Consensus
AMENITIES
• Shelter
• Playground(s)
• Garden

CIRCULATION
• Access
• Trails

LANDSCAPE
• Open Space
• Forest
• Meadow

Ideation
Ideation
Just one Thing?
THE NEXT STEPS...

PROTOTYPE, TEST
Not like a UK baller
“You Spoke, We Listened”
Annual Report
Every opportunity to remind, refresh
Keep asking; ask again, and again and again...

Continue the Communication
• Culture of responsiveness... being customer focused!
• Constant Communication ("Keep Asking Us!")
• Measure the impact
• Brand matches citizen input
• New methods of “finding out”

36 Months later
Why Does It Work?
When you are open; respond, and, demonstrate results and you will win public support.
They Spoke, We Listened

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Big Brother is Gone