ARE WE REALLY IN A PAPERLESS WORLD?
REFLECTION ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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Why Should We Engage the Public?

Today’s Headline:
“The City fails to.....”

When will they do anything right?
Why Should We Engage the Public?

Wasteful!

Inefficient!

Too many taxes!

Don’t they know all the good work I’ve done?

Do more with less!
## Defining Citizen Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Limitations/ Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informing about policy priorities, challenges, process, and results</strong></td>
<td>press releases, media reports, website, newsletter, bulletin board</td>
<td>One-way communication only Who pays attention? Cost and time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soliciting input</strong></td>
<td>committee work, survey, neighborhood meeting, townhall meeting</td>
<td>Cost and time Who will come? Do they fully understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making / approving decisions</strong></td>
<td>Polling, elections, committee work</td>
<td>Cost and time Who will come? Do they fully understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>surveys, 311 system, online complaint system, office hours, committee work</td>
<td>Cost and time Who will complain? What about the silent majority? Do they fully understand?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So many different approaches and tools ... 

There is no single approach that can serve all and do it all!
## Citizen Engagement Preferences:
Survey results from Indianapolis, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Top choice</th>
<th>2nd choice</th>
<th>3rd choice</th>
<th>Not picked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular mail newsletter</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City website</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic newsletters by email</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual neighborhood meeting</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone voice messages</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly text messages to cell phones</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don’t throw away your printers yet!
Citizen Engagement Preferences: Results from the Tulsa Survey, 2011

How Tulsa Residents Receive Information about the City

- Television
- Newspaper
- Tulsa World
- Radio
- Water bills
- City website
- Tulsa TV Channel
- Calling the City
- Council website
- Urban Tulsa
- Other
- Receive no information about the City
- Tulsa Beacon
- Oklahoma Eagle
- Definitely not prefer district meetings
- To some extent prefer district meetings
- Definitely prefer district meetings

Percentage of Respondents

Note: n = 1,800. All responses were weighted by age.

Don’t get rid of your traditional media managers and community liaisons if there’s a budget cut!
Citizen Engagement Preferences: Results from the Tulsa Survey, 2013

Communication Strategies

- TV
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Water bill
- City website
- Social media
- Calling the City
- City cable TV
- Text message
- Other (signs, flyers)

How to get info now
Best way to communicate
Analysis of the Tulsa Survey Results shows ...

- The younger generation favors online tools, while the older generation still relies heavily on traditional media (newspaper, TV, mail inserts)
- More educated and richer residents favor new technology and are more engaged (they will call and complain!), but they may not prefer a lot of face-to-face meetings
- Racial minorities and poorer residents favor neighborhood meetings
- Long-time residents and the more educated expect more information and engagement
- Those contacted by the police are always more negative \(\Rightarrow\) they need more engagement and information
### Rising Role of Social Media - Promises and Challenges

(In the 2013 Tulsa survey, only 4 percent of respondents prefer the city to use Twitter to communicate with them.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twitter: % of internet users who use Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Table" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Source:
Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 Internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

#### Note:
Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g., age).
Facebook is more heavily used by many people.

At the same time, some citizens view Facebook as a private circle communication tool. How much they are willing to use it to interact with public officials or governmental agencies is still subject to more research.

In the 2013 Tulsa survey, only 14 percent of respondents prefer the city to use Facebook to communicate with them.
How to Engage the Public?

• Think about the purpose of engagement (Educate? Consult? Decision-making? Political support building?)
• Think about your community’s demographic and socio-economic profiles
• What about your organization’s capacity to organize, process requests, and respond?
• Staff time (and opportunity costs)?
• Will it matter? Will the results make a difference?
• How do you plan to report back to citizens about the results of engagement and your responses?
An Example -- Indianapolis

- Citizen engagement efforts:

Social Media by Department

- Mayor's Office
  - http://twitter.com/MayorBallard
  - MayorGregBallard

- Department of Public Safety
  - http://twitter.com/IndianapolisDPS
  - http://twitter.com/IMPD_News
    - Division of Homeland Security (Public Safety)

- Mayor's Office of Sustainability
  - http://twitter.com/SustainIndy

- Indianapolis Department of Public Works
  - http://twitter.com/IndyDPW

- Indy Snow Force
  - http://twitter.com/IndySnowForce

- Krozone
  - http://twitter.com/#!/Krozone
  - http://www.facebook.com/#!/krozone

- Indy Parks and Recreation
  - http://twitter.com/#!/IndyParksandRec

- Indianapolis Downtown Inc.
  - http://twitter.com/#!/IndyDT

- Drug Free Marion County
  - Marion County Drug Free/101141979756453

- Arts Council of Indianapolis
  - http://twitter.com/#!/arts councilindy
Indianapolis Engagement Efforts

The Mayor has his “mayor’s night-outs” in African American churches, schools, nonprofit centers, libraries, …
Then keep the public informed through:

- Mass media reports, press releases
- Monthly neighborhood meetings
- Social media connections
- Regular e-newsletters
- Government TV channel + webcast
- Community meetings organized by neighborhood liaisons
- Online complain/service requests, with tracking case IDs
- Customer service call-backs after citizens file a complaint and a case is resolved
Contact Information

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