Pitfalls and winning strategies for community site visits
Christine Spratley
National Location Investment Services
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Do three things and do them well

- Listen
- Ask
- Listen
Barriers – Economic development corporation’s (EDC’s) point of view

► Difficult consultant
► Difficult company
► Tiffany syndrome
► Not enough information known
► Not enough time to prepare
► Unmanageable officials or partners
Barriers – prospect’s/consultant’s point of view

- Disorganized
- Too many people – more isn’t always better
- They don’t know what the company does or what the project is
- Irrelevant information
- Not being prepared to answer questions
Do you know

► Who are we talking about?
► What are we talking about?
► Where are they in the site selection process?
► What do they want to know, hear and see in your community?
► What would you like them to know, hear and see in your community?
► What are your deficiencies and how will you address them?
Question yourself – are you…

► Making time for what impacts the project
  ► Ask what are their priorities – send consultant a priority list
  ► May have to educate consultant and company as to why you want to include items in the agenda
  ► Does your agenda meet the company’s objectives?

► Preparing your partners
  ► Do they know the goals of the company?
  ► Manage up – develop talking points for officials – briefing memo
  ► Use them to impart information to the prospect
  ► Be strategic – don’t let an opportunity go to waste – seating assignments

► Presenting data as cohesively and sequentially as possible
  ► Have experts on hand, whenever possible

► Presenting a sound business case for the project to come
  ► Help them help you – give them business reasons to say yes
During the visit, remember to...

- Be a host, not just a tour guide
- Adjust on the go to the company’s style – customs and norms
  - Don’t just talk for the sake of talking
- Adding fluff doesn’t make up for deficiencies
  - If deficiencies arise, illustrate how you intend to cure them or limit their impact on the project
- Be able to convey messages in business context and not just EDC lingo
- Remember – it usually never goes exactly as planned
  - Let your participants know schedules may change (respectful, but flexible)
  - What are your backup plans?
    - Company changes its mind as to what is important
    - Company may choose to shorten the day, skip a meeting or go longer at one appointment
Recap

- Not knowing the company name isn’t an excuse to not do your homework
- Understand objectives of company
- It’s not only about the data
- What you say may not be what they hear
- Prep and right size participation partners
- Keep confidences even if the company discloses what it is
- Follow up immediately and often
Final thoughts

Listen

Ask

Listen
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