

Pitfalls and winning strategies for community site visits

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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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