PRIMA'S 2017 RISK MANAGEMENT

WEBINAR SERIES



Addressing Safety and Liability Concerns while Improving Customer Relationships

Engaging Your Community

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Engaging Your Community



Engaging Your Community

Objectives

- Discuss how the public sector influences many elements of community life.
- Outline how perceptions can affect citizens opinions about public entities.
- Outline why community engagement can help prepare your organization for when a community crisis occurs.
- Discuss why improved customer experience with your public entity is important.

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The Nature of Public Entities

Public Entities have influence (if not complete control) over the "what" and the "how" of many elements of community life:

- Land use
- Budgets and taxation
- Fire and Police
- Schools/ Education
- Utilities and rates
- Codes & Permitting
- Leisure, Streets, and Sanitation Services

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The Nature of Public Entities

If poorly managed, decisions made in these areas can create negative perceptions of the public entity by citizens.



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Citizen Perception

A recent citizen perception study found the following:

- Citizen perception was formed primarily by a personal experience with the governmental service provider.
- The nature of the interactions with government employees and agencies is critical to the way people judge an agency and government itself.
- Citizens expressed deep outrage and resentment when they were treated with disrespect.

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Citizen Perception

- Citizens feel that some, but not all, governmental services are better in upscale neighborhoods.
- Despite their sophistication and interest in government, citizens feel powerless and say that they cannot influence changes in how services are delivered.
- People want and like information from government.

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Citizen Perception of Government

When the perception about government is:

Bureaucratic
Poor Service
Poor Customer Service
Lack of Transparency
Will Not Listen

Citizens and Customers response is:

Disengagement
Indifference
Apathy
Anger
Frustrations

Are anger and frustration issues real?





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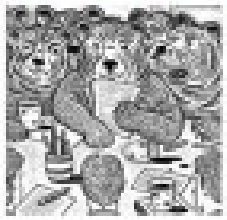
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Angry and Irate Citizens

PlannersWeb

News & Information for Citizen Planners

Home Page | For Planning Comm'rs | Basic Tools | Planning Topics | Columns | Resources | Help! | Today's Planning News



January 15th, 2008
Article #233

You must be logged in or a member to download this PDF.

See also our online Public Hearings Resource Guide

Dealing With an Angry Public

by Debra Stein

Read the start of this article below; to download the full article you need to be a PlannersWeb member. Already a member? — be sure you're logged-in. Not a member? Consider joining the PlannersWeb.

Contrary to popular belief, angry citizens are not an inevitable and unavoidable part of the decision-making process. With a little advance planning, and some subtle interpersonal tactics, you can avoid triggering citizens' negative emotions and prevent nasty behavior that disrupts good governance.

Don't Make 'Em Mad

Citizens often feel angry when they are frustrated — that is, when they want something and think you are unfairly preventing them from getting it. You can minimize the sense of disappointment and resulting anger by making certain that citizens have realistic expectations. "The hearing on the proposed shopping center isn't going to come up on the agenda for at least another two hours." At a public hearing, the chair should describe the agenda and sequence of events, tell the audience when they'll have an opportunity to speak, and set the ground rules regarding testimony topics or time limits.

People get angry when they feel manipulated, ignored, insulted, made to look ridiculous, or treated in a condescending manner.

People are less likely to feel angry when they understand that their frustration isn't the result of unfair or arbitrary action. It's particularly important to explain the appropriate rules when it looks like some people are being granted special rights. "Our adopted rules provide that the project manager has fifteen

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Angry and Irate Citizens

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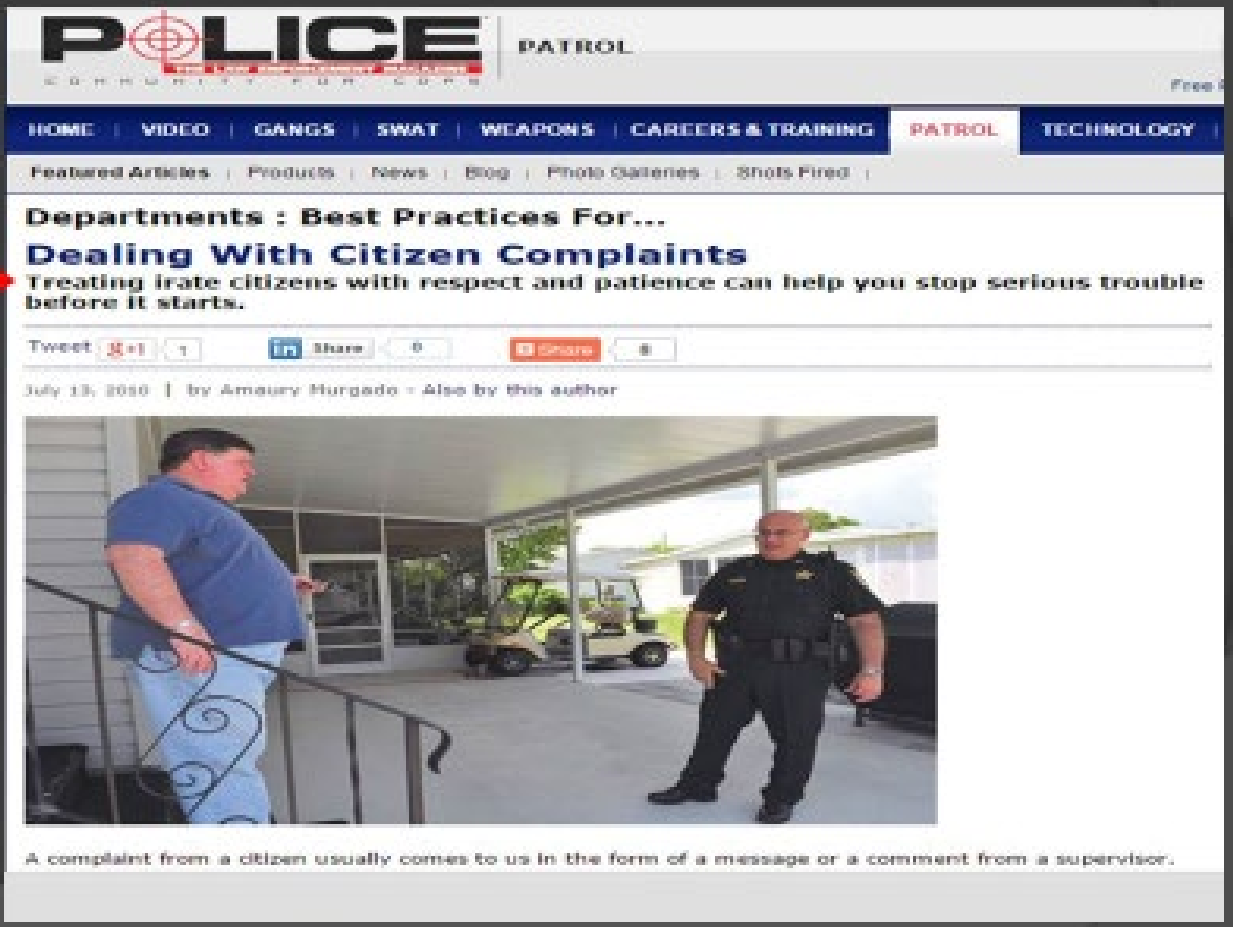
Hawkins Council Blasted by Irate Citizens at Meetings

Posted: Friday, September 30, 2011 3:30 pm



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Angry and Irate Citizens



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Managing the Interpersonal Transaction

- Positive &/or Negative Interpersonal Transactions
  - Neutral Emotional Value
  - Remain Vigilant
  - Totality of the Circumstances
- A Downward Spiral Fueled by Social Media
  - Sarcasm, Ultimatums, Condescending Tone
- Of Wolves, Sheep and Sheepdogs
  - Drawing the reasonable people toward you
  - Know the Difference between a Wolf & a Sheep
  - Shouldn't treat wolves like they are sheep
  - Can't treat sheep like they are wolves
- Resolve to Interact with the Public with Respect

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Organizational Issues

- What are possible results of citizen anger and frustration?
  - Contentious interactions
  - Increased employee stress
  - Decline in productivity
  - Increased incidence of employee absenteeism
  - Discontent among employees
  - Increased worker errors that can create liability issues



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Organizational Issues

- What are possible extreme results of citizen anger and frustration?

Ferguson, Missouri



City Property Damaged



Citizens Arrested



Community Damage

No Community Trust, Loyalty, or Cohesiveness

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What Should Be Our Focus?

Community Engagement



Community Engagement

Important Elements:

- *Inclusive*
- *On-going*
- *Builds Trust & Confidence*

Researcher Elizabeth Paluck found that biased attitudes decreased when people from diverse backgrounds were required to:

- *Work cooperatively on a project*
- *Creates opportunity for relationship building & growth*

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Community Engagement

- What is Community Engagement?

*This is a general term used to describe a philosophy and approach where local governments build ongoing community partnerships, provide improved public information, and establish service standards, in the hopes of strengthening the relationship with the "**reasonable people**" in the community.*

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Positive Community Relationships

Law Enforcement has realized the value of engaging the community when it developed community policing.

Community policing is a form of community engagement that is specific to law enforcement

The DOJ states:

*Community policing is, in essence, a **collaboration** between the police and the community that identifies and solves community problems...The neighborhood patrol officer, backed by the police organization, helps community members mobilize support and resources to solve problems and enhance their quality of life.*

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Positive Community Relationships

- Why Community Engagement?
  - Better identification & understanding of community issues or concerns
  - Increased opportunities to provide context and balance to the discussion
  - Transparency & Increased trust
  - More civil discussions and interactions



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Positive Community Relationships

- Why Community Engagement?
  - Improved local government decision-making and actions
  - Improved citizen experience with local government
  - Decreased chances of confrontation and even violence towards public employees



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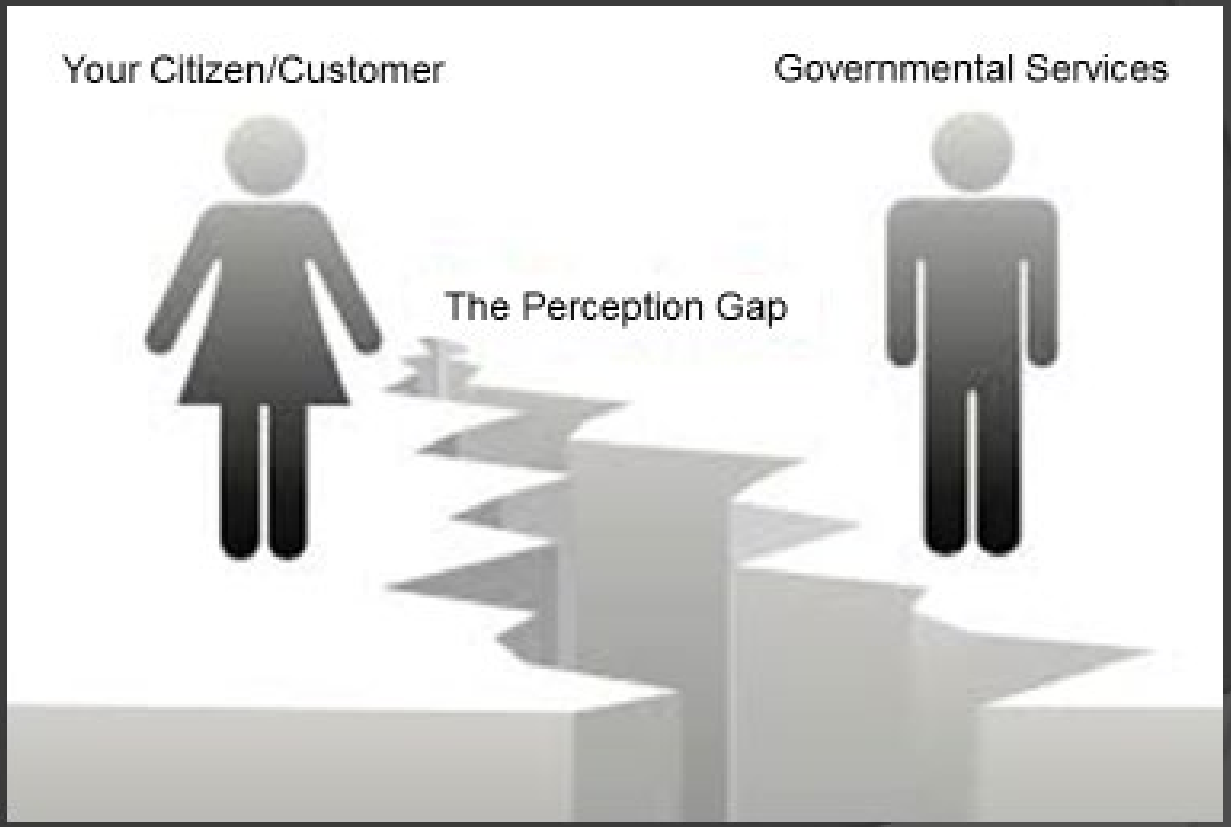
Community Engagement is Relationship Building



What's in your Community Trust Account?

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Bridge the Perception Gap



For most, perception is reality!

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Who Are We?

We are Public Service Providers



It is not about US… it is about our citizens & customers!

Engaging Your Community

What is a Citizen/Customer?

- A customer/citizen is a person who brings us their wants or needs and it is our job to "reasonably" assist them.



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What is a Customer/Citizen?

- A customer/citizen is:
  - The most important person to us…by phone, email, or in person.
  - Not dependent upon us, we exist to serve them.
  - Not an interruption of our work… they are the purpose of our work.

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What is a Customer/Citizen?

- We are not doing a favor by serving them… they are doing us a favor by allowing us the opportunity to do so.
- A customer/citizen is not someone to argue with… no one has ever won an argument with a citizen/customer.

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Customer Service Definition

All interaction between the consumer and the product/service provider at the time of the sale/service.

It incorporates customer expectation and opinion by focusing on whether the product or service has met the customer's expectation. That "focus" is evidenced by the dedication, attitude, and integrity of the service provider.



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Customer Experience Definition

Customer "Experience" differs from "Service" in that it is the sum of all experiences & perceptions a customer has with a services provider for the duration of their on-going business relationship. Customer Service is essential because it *is the foundation of* the total customer experience!



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Customer Experience

The more we focus on the "Total Experience", the more we are doing to pull the "reasonable people" to our side.



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Engaging Your Customer

Understand that customers usually have two basic needs:

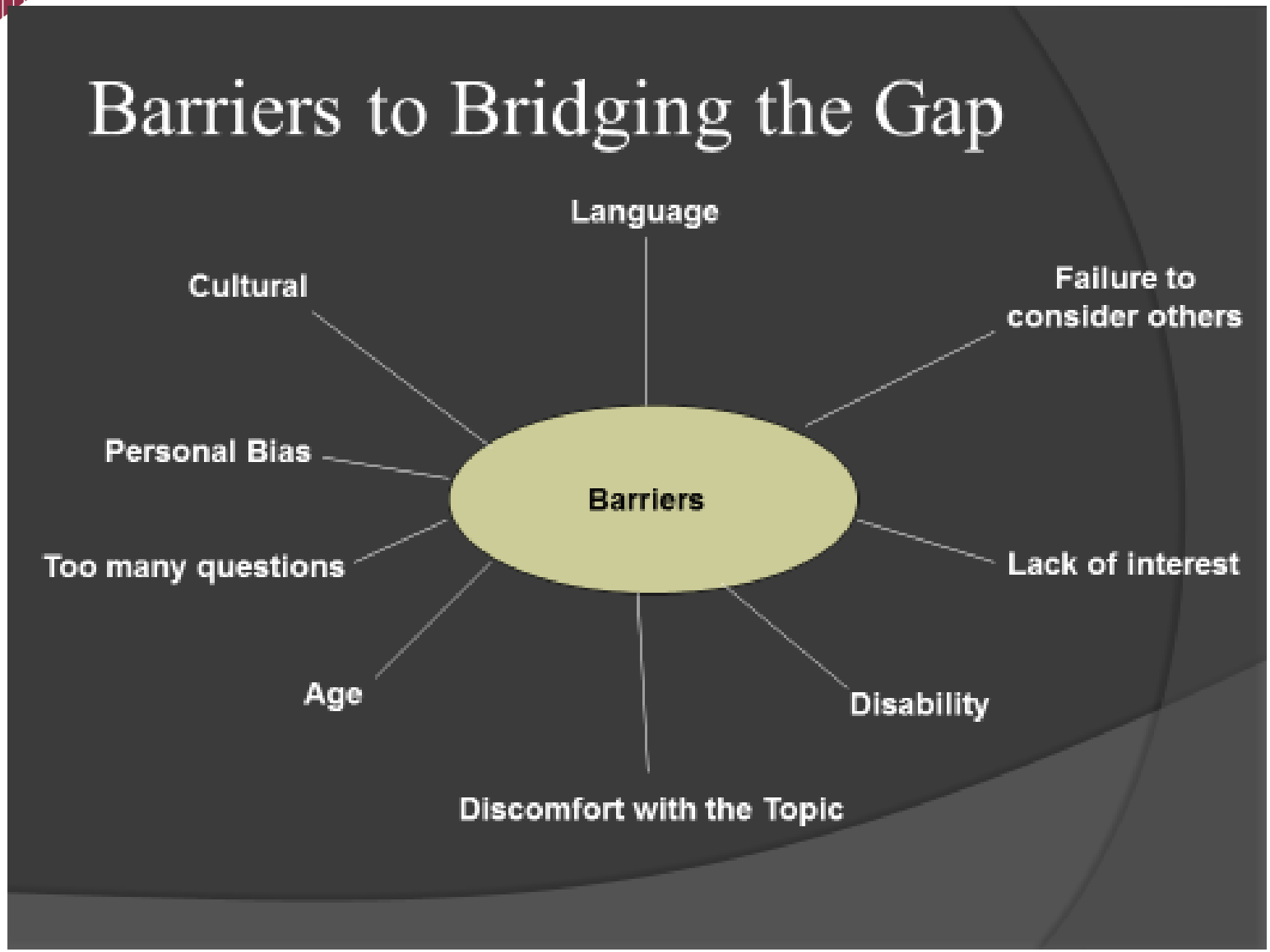
- *Rational – The basic assistance requested*
- *Emotional – How the customer "feels" about the service they receive.*

Emotions are directly related to the way customers rate your service. For instance, feelings of:

- Delight, relief, and since of belonging – Good Service
- Frustration, anger, being unwelcome – Poor Service

"In many situations, customers want service and assurance."

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Who is Responsible?

Remember:

- Each employee is a "Good-will Ambassador" for your organization.
- When Citizens/Customers think of your organization, they think of you.

Therefore:

- We must listen & seek understanding
  - Remove any barriers!
- Go the "extra mile" to assist and serve.
  - Treat others the way you want to be treated

YOU ARE!

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Community Engagement - Internal Action Plan

- Leadership should make community engagement an organizational priority.
- Build your team and develop your engagement plan
- The Action Plan must address how to keep customer/citizen efforts current and how to infuse the appropriate culture into the organization.
- Train your employees on the soft skills (customer service, civility, communication, & diversity) and hire employees with good interpersonal skills.

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Community Engagement - External Action Plan

- Know your community, the citizens: assess and understand their needs.
- Seek greater opportunities to engage citizens, customers and community groups to build relationships and trust.
  - Seek multichannel approaches: *that includes a comprehensive array of communication vehicles (social, mobile, web, etc.) – tell your story!*
  - Appoint a Neighborhood/Community Engagement Coordinator
  - Develop relationships w/ Associations/Clergy/community leaders
- Community engagement must be deliberate, intentional, ongoing, and not in response to a crisis!

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Be the Director of Your Own Movie

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