The Importance of Community in Tourism

2001 Rural Tourism Development Conference

Many, Louisiana

November 8, 2001
Overview

- Know What You Want
- Decide Who Gets to Play
- Put Pot on Stove …
- Win Friends and Influence People
- Share a Bigger Sandbox
- Don’t Let Folks Go Away Mad
- Final Thoughts
Knowing What You Want

Goals and Objectives

- Different people want different things
  - Preservation-minded developers or visitor friendly preservationists?
  - Is your mission tourism or education?
- Arch has to encompass ("big tent")
Knowing What You Want

Goals and Objectives

- Need to articulate early
  - Elevator speech
  - Case statement
- OK to change over time
  - Pioneers leave
  - Keep a written record (rationale with decisions)
Who Gets to Play

- Group dynamics
  - Grassroots vs. top-down (philosophy)
  - Levels and functions (practicality)
Who Gets to Play

- Group dynamics
  - Confronting professionally
    - Peer to peer
    - Process accountability
  - Knowledgeable decision-making
Who Gets to Play

Organization matters

- Staff critically important in terms of pace
- Need a home but live outside it
- Planning is perpetual
- Beyond initial success (e.g. March of Dimes)
Put Pot on Stove…

- Difference between planning, selling and doing (attracts different individuals)
- Everything takes longer and is harder to do than you originally thought
Put Pot on Stove...

- Think S: strategy, sequence, scale (pilot projects)
- Align activity with right group/individual
- Staff can be a blessing and a curse
Put Pot on Stove…

- Business leadership cuts through it
  - Results-oriented (but is quickest best?)
  - Sometimes politically naïve
  - Beware conflicts of interest
Winning Friends

- It’s all politics (source of all support)
- All politics is local
  (vision + happy people = funding)
- Future funding depends on how you spend what you have
Winning Friends

- Invest in planning
  - Should have professional look
  - Think visually about what you want to do
- Name-brand consultants
Winning Friends

- Tell them you’re great – then live up to your reputation
- Target part of project for early success
- Thank your supporters and let them share in the glory
A Bigger Sandbox

- Network aggressively (conferences)
- Learn from others with similar projects
- Read journals/newsletters
- Join associations (national/regional)
- Seek collaborative opportunities
- Tell your story to state leaders, media
Staying Friends

- Keep a positive outlook – glass is half full not half empty
- Celebrate small achievements together
- Manage creative tensions
  - Stand back periodically and assess
  - Realize sometimes you have to give to get
Common Tensions

- Staff vs. volunteer
- Central coordination vs. local autonomy
- Fast vs. slow
- Turtle and the hare
- Truth vs. message
- People from “off”
- Money to plan vs. funds to do
Hard-Won Truths

- 10% will never get the message
- Noses bend easily out of shape and take forever to bend back
- Ancient promises are not forgotten
- You have something to sell even if everyone else tells you that you don’t
- Disagreement is healthy; silence is not
Final Thoughts

- Ask for help
- Keep generational perspective
- Find humor where you can
- Eat and enjoy fellowship
- Remember how geese fly