



# FOCUSING YOUR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS TO BUILD DOWNTOWN ADVOCATES

By: Cristina Sheppard-Decius, CMSM  
President, POW! Strategies, Inc.

# THE GREAT COMMUNICATORS

## *DDAs/Main Streets Have Many Roles:*

- The Moderator
- The Informer
- The Enforcer
- The Listener
- The Therapist
- The Influencer
- The Motivator
- The Leader



THE THERAPIST

# BUILDING ADVOCATES - THINK FROM WITHIN

**Internal** = within an organization, the internal message & how to prepare those to help with the external message

➤ **Interpersonal** = relationships or actions that take place **between** two or more people

➤ **Intrapersonal** = things that go on exclusively within one person



# IMPORTANCE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



Builds  
Understanding



Builds Trust



Coordinates



Motivates



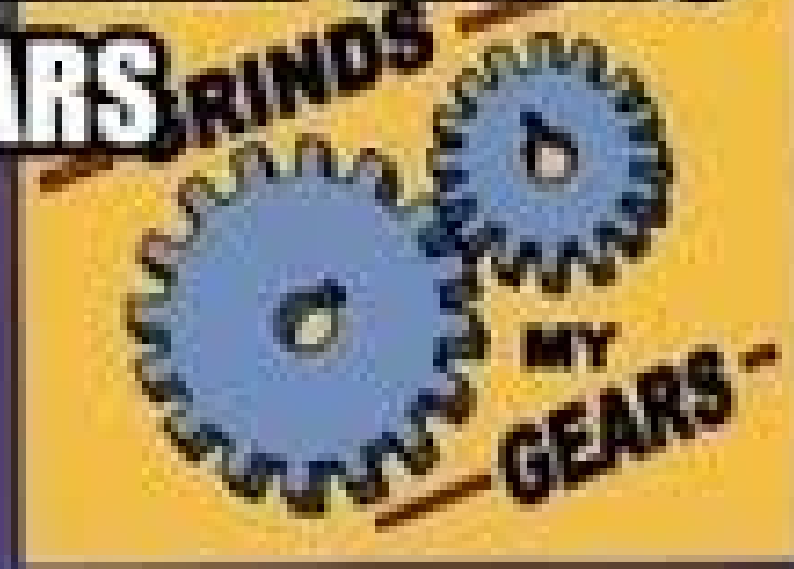
Satisfied



Management  
Efficiency

COMMUNICATIONS  
STRATEGY FOR YOUR  
INTERNAL AUDIENCES

**YOU KNOW WHAT REALLY GRINDS  
MY GEARS**



**BEING AN AFTERTHOUGHT!**

# IMPORTANCE OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

- Provides a Clear Roadmap to Achieve Goals & Actions
- Keeps You Focused - Spend Time On The Right Things For Business

*Enables important conversations and engagement  
with business leaders and partners  
SO EVERYONE can best deliver on key business  
needs and opportunities.*

**WHAT DO YOU WANT TO  
WALK AWAY KNOWING?**

# PARTS OF A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

---

- Core Values/Vision/Mission
- Define Your Target Audiences
- Identify Situation & Issues
- Establish Goals/Objectives/Metrics
- Key Messaging
- Compile Your Communication Toolbox
- Create & Implement!
- Evaluate
- Retool







**CITY MANAGERS  
& LEADERS**

**STAFF**

**EMPLOYEES**

**CITY  
DEPTS.**

**BUSINESS  
OWNERS**

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**VOLUNTEERS**

**AUDIENCES**

# DEFINING THE SITUATION OR ISSUES

## Ask Yourself:

- Where Do People Get Their Info?
- What's On the Rise or Plaguing Your Downtown?
- What Are People/Audiences Saying Currently? What Might They Say?
- What Do You Want to Achieve?
- Who's Impeding Progress? AND Who's Impeding the Process?
- What Work Flow & Communications Tools Can Be Improved?

SOME  
COMMON  
DOWNTOWN  
ISSUES

---

The DDA's Role

---

The Volunteer's Role

---

Institutional Knowledge

---

Construction

---

Decision Making/Politics

---

Design Aesthetics/Quality Control

SOME  
COMMON  
DOWNTOWN  
ISSUES

---

Business Turnover

---

Employee Turnover

---

Overpromising

---

Unrealistic Expectations

---

Lack of Management

---

**PARKING!!!**

**omg they did WHAT last night??!**



**FOMO.**



# INTRAPERSONAL BAD HABITS/TRAITS

- Unskilled Communicators
- Half-Listeners
- Disco Bulbs
- Not Thinking Before Speaking
- People Speaking Out of Turn
- Jealous/Ulterior Motives
- Road Blockers
- Unapproachable



Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Relevant

Time frame

**S**

**M**

**A**

**R**

**T**

G

O

A

L

S



# TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK





# The ommunication Toolbox

- Face-to-Face
- Manuals
- Action Plans
- Shared Docs/  
Open Sources
- Eblasts/Newsletters
- Direct Emails
- SMS/Text
- Social Media Group  
Pages
- Pick Up the Phone!

# BEST PRACTICES

Listen at all Levels

Work Together on the Key Message

Hold Meetings

Hold the People in the Plan Accountable

Be Transparent/Upfront

# BEST PRACTICES

Clear Chain of Command/Who's In Charge of What

Define Steps in the Process

Know When to Put It In Writing

Document Successes

Post-Analysis - Discuss What Didn't Work



## **CRISTINA SHEPPARD-DECIUS, CMSM**

Founder/President of POW! Strategies, Inc.

*Providing Executive Management Services for Dearborn DDAs*

Mobile: 248-760-9265

Email: [csdecius@gmail.com](mailto:csdecius@gmail.com)