

Lessons Learned

The Keys to Success with Critical Community Issues

Leadership Savannah Class of 92-94

You have to believe in your vision!
Idealism and naiveté can be helpful!
Believe that you can do it in Savannah, Ga. USA!

Educate yourself; do your homework well!
Do it right – well done – set a high standard!
Focus, focus, tighter, then even tighter!
Empathy creates energy!
Seek out advice from constructive experts!
Energy level will be high at the beginning!
Help people who want your help!
Don't be surprised when people question your motives!

Be in touch with your beliefs; have faith!
Everyone has a hero inside!
Be energized by the higher purpose!
Be passionate; look for the energy!
Be passionate; believe in what you are doing!

Identify barriers!
Take chances; break out of the old paradigm!
Be creative; build new solutions!
Be flexible!
Adapt when you run into a barrier!

Pay attention to the process!
Respect differences; agree to disagree!
You can't do it by yourself!
Teamwork will be frustrating!
Team members must keep each other encouraged!
Recruit a core group – a few of the right people!
Groups need a mix of planners and doers!
Hold hands, especially when the going is tough!
Someone must be able to articulate the vision!
Someone must be the coach and cheerleader!
Don't expect everyone to participate or follow-through!
Someone must see a path to the vision!
Build a team with a mix of skills!
Be inclusive; don't prejudge!

Network; ask for help!
Don't count on government!
Identify key players and get their buy-in!
You need a plan!
Set a time frame!
Be in touch with reality; but don't start there!
Take progress checks – evaluate your progress!
Don't assume; get the facts; test your assumptions!
No matter how good the idea, it must have support!
Link up with other organizations for skills and resources!

Fund raising is an art!
If you want someone's money you need their enthusiasm first!

Line up the resources!

Build optimism and enthusiasm!

Find a way to get people excited!

Create a hands-on experience to build commitment to the idea!

Involvement builds commitment!

Market your idea!

Don't let setbacks stop you!

Don't give up!

Publicly stated goals build commitment!

Stay focused; don't get sidetracked!

Have tenacity and patience!

Timing may help; be patient; be ready!

Keep asking "why not?" over and over again!

One of the most satisfying but challenging experiences is to make a difference for your community. That event of seeing a hope become a reality – restoration of a fountain, startup of a program that makes kids lives more successful, funding of a band shell, creating special experiences for an elementary class, building a neighborhood coalition, or helping neighbors take ownership of their neighborhood – often becomes a benchmark in the lives of those who made it happen.

While each situation is unique – as to circumstances and people involved – we can all learn and benefit from those who have struggled to better our community.

Reoccurring patterns and themes emerged when we analyzed the critical issues team that were formed by participants in the '92-'94 Leadership Savannah Program. This list provides guideposts distilled from the experiences of that Class. We hope that this may be a tool for your journey – whether as a spontaneous initiative or part of a larger organization – is both successful and satisfying.

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