



The Political Landscape

PRO Emerging Leaders Stream

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Outline

- The Emerging Leader
- What role does Politics play in local Parks and Recreation
- Why “political savvy” is critical
- How to operate in a political environment
- Understanding the Political Process
- Lessons



Know What You Want

- I have always wanted to be somebody, but I see now I should have been more specific

Lily Tomlin



The Emerging Leader



- Has a plan (or at least appears to have a plan)
- Is able to communicate effectively
- Is able to build an effective team
- Has a clear vision of what they are trying to accomplish
- Can develop buy in and consensus around their vision and their projects
- Often has to build this buy in and consensus in a political context or environment

Know Where You are Going

- I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it is.

Wayne Gretsky



Success

- The only place you find success before work is in the dictionary.

May V. Smith



Role of Politics in Parks and Recreation

- Always “Somebody” or “Some Body” that makes decisions that affect your program, career and activities
 - “Somebody”—Specific Councillor, Committee Chair, Board Member or Chair
 - “Some Body”—Council, Board or Committee



Success

- Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out...

Robert Collier



The “Somebody” Relationship



- Take time to get to know and understand that “somebody”
- Know what their background is, their accomplishments, their strengths and weaknesses
- Understand what are their key motivators and long term objectives
- Get a connection or a clear understanding of your relationship

The “Somebody” Relationship

- Get them to understand how you can be helpful in achieving their long term objectives
- Build trust and credibility through small successes
- Don't blindside or embarrass them in any way (media, public meetings, special events, etc.)
- Give them the credit for good things
- Take the blame when things don't go well or as planned



Success

- There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, learning from failure.

Colin Powell



The “Some Body” Relationship

- Typically, a more challenging relationship
- Understand the politics and dynamics of the group
- Understand the alliances, voting blocks and perspectives of the individual members
- Try to build relationships and understanding
- Count the votes and understand the dynamics of a “live” political debate



The “Some Body” Relationship



- Provide briefing for key members or opinion leaders, but be clear as to why you are briefing them
- Get the tough questions dealt with privately so that you can have the right answers in public
- Build consensus and broader support for your projects and ideas—deputations, written briefs, media coverage
- Remember that politicians have to perform on occasion and don't take that personally

The “Some Body” Relationship



- Have an “exit strategy” or deferral scenario thought out so that you can make adjustments and build support rather than go down in flames
- Understand when to use the “exit strategy” to keep your powder dry for another day
- Clearly understand the rules of engagement and the process when in a public setting

The “Some Body” Relationship

- Don't take the bait when provoked or attacked in public setting—always seek refuge in the Chair
- Prepare key messages and media materials and review them in advance with Mayor or Committee/Board Chair
- Don't be a media hog—let the elected officials be in front of the camera or quoted in the media, you provide “background and context”



Make an Impression

- In judging others, folks will work overtime for no pay.

Charles Edwin Craters



Success

- Don't be afraid to go out on a limb....that's where the fruit is!



Success

- Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.

Albert Schweitzer



Success

- The road to success is lined with many tempting parking spaces

Source Unknown



Key Messages

- Never be afraid to get your hands dirty
- Never ask your staff to do what you wouldn't do
- Maintain and nurture your network
- Pull your share of the load, and more
- Don't be afraid to show leadership, especially sectoral leadership
- Be aware of your image and perceptions



Key Messages

- Your reputation takes years to build and moments to destroy
- Be honest and up front with everyone
- Don't embellish your qualifications and experiences, and don't try to be an expert in things you are not
- Remember Balance is important--"Work Hard, Play Hard" (each at the appropriate time)



Key Messages

- Surround yourself with great people
- People like to be around people who are fun and enthusiastic
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Give people “straight talk” feedback
- “By your deeds, you shall be known”



Success Depends On Your View

- If you are not the lead dog, your view never changes

Kathy Bird

