

COLLABORATIVE INFORMED CONSENT MODEL OF COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

**14 LAGNIAPPES TO USE WITH THE
COLLABORATIVE INFORMED CONSENT
MODEL OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT****1. LAGNIAPPES**

We also believe you should have fun. And that brings us to our Lagniappes.

Everything we share today we have experienced, and you may want to take notes, mainly when I say this is a Lagniappe; you know that *something a little extra* just for you! We are sharing several with you as part of our value add.

2. LAGNIAPPE – BE AUTHENTIC

Here is a crucial lagniappe.

BE WHO YOU ARE!

To accomplish any of this, though, you must be authentic. It helps if you are you.

We are not into “touchy-feely.” However, we believe you have to learn and practice some “softer skills.” One part of this is being comfortable in your “own skin.”

And it would be best if you committed to learning new ways to become more skilled.

You may be like Darryl, an introvert, who has practiced learning the skills to be an extrovert when he facilitates meetings, negotiates difficult situations, and resolves thorny issues.

However, the last thing you ever want to do in this evolutionary process is fake it until you make it!

Yes, there are perhaps new skills you will need to learn and practice. More on that shortly.

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3. LAGNIAPPE - WHO ELSE NEEDS TO KNOW?

When you adopt the CIC process, you continually need to ask internally and externally the question.

"Who else needs to know?" and "How do we best notify those that need to know?"

Many of you are beginning to realize the CIC process is different.

4. LAGNIAPPE - THE SERVANT'S HEART

However, we must always choose to communicate and engage with *good intentions* and always with a "*servant's heart*." To be a leader and gain trust and respect in your community outreach, you must lead with your heart. There can be no compromise. Whatever profession you are in, your approach must always be to provide service.

Approaching tense, challenging, and even hostile situations requires a commitment to service.

Yes, it can be scary even intimidating at times, especially if you are more introverted and technical than extroverted and social.

5. LAGNIAPPE – STIMPY PHOTO

None of us are the same today as yesterday, nor will we be the same tomorrow. We are the sum total of our experiences. Those experiences – be they positive or negative – make us the person we are at any given point in our lives. And, like a flowing river, those same experiences, and those yet to come, continue to influence and reshape the person we are and the person we become.

When Darryl first started our business and facilitated meetings, his first engagement in our firm almost ended his career. Having been an executive and worked for some challenging ones, including providing security for a CEO, he accepted a contract to facilitate an executive-level discussion in D.C. He prepared as best he could. At that time, the Internet was practically non-existent for research.

However, before Darryl went on stage that morning, he didn't know that the CEO would announce he was laying off half of his workforce. Darryl felt he was set up to fail. He felt betrayed, used, and personally hurt.

But he learned a lesson. Always keep something in front of you that makes you smile and feel needed. **Remember to breathe**, his daughter Danielle would say. And always accept that kaka can hit the fan when you least expect it.

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And since then, he always keeps a photo in his facilitation notebook to ensure he breathes and doesn't take on the personal barbs that can be slung at him during intense situations.

At the end of that meeting, Darryl returned his payment to the CEO and his opinion of him.

6. LAGNIAPPE – MIND MAP

We recommend you do a mind-map on paper such as this one to determine as many stakeholders as you can at the outset. For whatever reason, stakeholders are those people who think, feel, or believe they have a “stake” or “interest” in your work. Mindmapping allows us to be creative in our thinking and do it on paper.

7. LAGNIAPPE – THE POWER OF SILENCE

And as Mike and the Mechanics said in their power-ballad of 1988, The Living Years remember that "You can listen as well as you hear."

Know when to stop talking and be silent. Listen and hear what your guest is saying instead of composing your response in your head.

8. LAGNIAPPE – HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL

Because communication at all levels in our lives is *a two-way exchange* of information, thoughts, *and feelings*, our intent should always be to **engage in and share a meaningful conversation**, not a dry, technical presentation filled with hard-to-read maps, charts, and data.

Build, edit, rewrite, rehearse your presentation, and tell a story, for goodness sake. People love stories.

People will not remember what you said during your presentation; *they will remember how you made them feel*. There are two types of mind-processing of information: analytical and emotional. A good story includes both.

9. LAGNIAPPE – INFORM AND EDUCATE EARLY IN THE PROCESS

The earlier you inform and educate your stakeholders, the better. Another place you don't want site neighbors to learn of your work is from ill-informed citizens or politicians. And remember, stakeholders also include employees at a site and contractors.

10. LAGNIAPPE - PAST BEHAVIOR IS THE BEST PREDICTOR OF FUTURE BEHAVIOR

Typical outraged stakeholder behavior is most often predictable based on the stakeholder's past behavior. Please make a note of this.

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For example, community leaders that have thwarted a charity from building a facility in their community will be outraged to be the last to know there is a contaminated groundwater plume underneath their homes.

Failing to take the time to discover and explore possible issues and past behaviors of stakeholders within a community leads to stakeholder cynicism and skepticism of you and your organization, outrage, harmful activism, and media scrutiny. Outrage and project disruption, if it develops, is intensified when the stakeholders are not brought into the communications process from the beginning.

11. LAGNIAPPE – DROP THE ACRONYMS

"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." – Albert Einstein

Drop the acronyms, speak them out, and explain to your listeners what they mean when you use them. Consider using the quarter in the coffee cup as a penalty if you get caught using acronyms.

12. LAGNIAPPE – STOP LOOKING AT YOUR SHOES

How many of you do poster sessions or open houses before your public meetings?

If you are doing them, when your guests arrive, stop looking at your shoes, greet people with a smile, and genuinely offer to show them around and personally answer their questions.

If you have your subject matter experts attend, choose them with care. You don't have to be swarmy or buddy-buddy; just be authentic. Arrogance and superiority behaviors are totally unacceptable.

Dress appropriately. A sports coat and golf shirt sure makes people feel more comfortable than a suit and tie.

And, when you are doing meetings, use a trained facilitator who uses a facilitated process to conduct your meeting. Or, at least get facilitator training and use it yourself.

13. LAGNIAPPE – PERSONALITY STYLES

There are ten difficult personality styles you encounter every day. You may recognize a few below, including yourself, perhaps—failure to understand how to handle such personalities handicaps your ability to be resilient in conducting meetings. Research them and understand how to manage them to deal with them internally and externally.

1. Sherman Tank – The Tank – “Rollover you.”
2. Sniper – Sniper – “Shoot and duck behind the tree.”

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3. Exploder – Grenade – Explode when least expected.
4. Complainers – Whiners – The “Saturday Night Live” whining skit.
5. Negativist – The “No” Person – Drive you to despair.
6. Clam – The “Nothing” Person – Silent and can be deadly.
7. Bulldozer – “The Know It All.”
8. The “Yes” Person – Leaves a trail of commitments and broken promises.
9. The “Maybe” Person – They put off decisions until too late.
10. The “Think-They-Know-It-All” Person – I really don’t know much at all.

14. LAGNIAPPE – OPERATING PRINCIPLES

THERE ARE NO GROUND RULES - WHY WE USE OPERATING PRINCIPLES INSTEAD.

All facilitated meetings should have a clearly defined purpose, process, and desired outcome and proposed and agreed-upon operating principles.

We don’t use ground rules when we facilitate our meetings. We believe rules are made to be broken; *principles* are respected.

The facilitator establishes the meetings' parameters and protocols using "proposed operating principles" that the attendees help define and agree to, instead of the traditional "ground rules," as many governmental organizations prefer.

We *propose* such operating principles as:

- We respect that your time is valuable. We will start and end this meeting on time.
- At the end of the allotted time, we will negotiate with our guests to extend time if needed.
- We encourage conversation, participation, and dialogue in an orderly and respectful manner.
- Please speak loudly enough so everyone can hear.
- We propose that respect and consideration between all parties lead to collaboration, understanding, good counsel, and thoughtful decisions.

Note that we *propose*.

Once presented, we ask the guests is there anyone who would *disagree* with these proposed operating principles? And then, we respectfully ask, “Are there others you would propose?”

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THANK YOU

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