

## Municipal Engagement

### A brief introduction

In Spring and Summer of 2011, the Midwestern Ontario Regional Green Jobs Strategy worked with local champions, including Economic Development Managers and Labour Marketing Planning Boards, to facilitate information sessions for Municipal, Region and County level government leaders to learn about the role that they can play in the Green Economy as well as the local economic benefits of doing so.

The observations and experiences collected while assisting with planning and execution of the events are listed summarily to be included in a toolkit of resources that can be found at [www.workgreen.ca](http://www.workgreen.ca). The toolkit of resources includes the presentation that was given during the information session as well as the documents and resources that were provided to all invitees.

### Best Practices

#### The Importance of Champions

Champions are community leaders with an existing network of contacts and relationships. Municipal engagement will have a better outcome with the support of champions and community leaders. The champions will have a pulse on the best location, date(s) and time(s) for engagement.

#### Not Just Engagement but Value Added Resources

Municipal staff and politicians have full schedules. If you expect them to give up an hour, an afternoon or a day then there must be some added value to justify the time that is spent attending your session. Resources, services, assistance and contacts are all examples of ways to increase the perceived value of the information that you have to offer.

#### Details, details, details

Organization is key to ensuring that the details are managed properly. This is one example where there is no such thing as being too thorough. All areas of details should be clearly assigned to ensure that nothing is missed. Don't leave anything to chance and be sure to figure out every step including who is going to handle working with the venue's staff, who will design communications material and who is responsible for registration. This information can be organized in a chart showing a deadline for each item and the staff person responsible for meeting it. Don't forget the person who is responsible for preparing the presentation – who will liaison with them to make sure that they have everything they need to find the place and engage with the participants of your seminar. Most important of all, don't forget to designate someone who will oversee it all and answer any questions, from who is invited, to how the room will be set up, to who will give opening and closing remarks.

### The Key to Handouts

An alternative to a formal presentation document is a summary sheet that will outline the important content from the session. This handout is best prepared by the subject matter expert – the one giving the presentation who has a high level understanding of what details are really important to the overall topic. The handout is best outlined in the same order that it will be presented in. Most important of all is to make note of any key points that are not in the handout as well. This format allows the attendees to really focus on what you are saying instead of trying to capture everything you say in the form of handwritten notes and risk missing the most important point of all.

### Follow-up

Since engagement is key, it is best to follow-up with both those who attended and those who were unable to attend. The seminar is just a starting point for the engagement process and all materials – the presentation and resources – should be shared.

### Success is in the Details

The little details can make the difference between a smooth event and a disorganized day for the event organizers. On the day of the event, make sure you have on hand:

- Directional signage for inside the venue and outside too
- Tape (masking, scotch, duct, etc.)
- Sharpie Markers
- Paper
- Pens
- Handouts
- Laptop
- Projector
- Power Bar
- Extension Cord