Why stakeholder engagement matters more than ever, and what you can do about it

Kim Marshall | Director of Client Services, Blue Drop | September 12, 2018
- Nonprofit organization
- Founded by DC Water
- Consulting for other utilities
“Who’s that person, and why should I care?”
Why are we here?
Interesting, but NOT ENOUGH.
Why are we here?
NOT ENOUGH. WHY?
Why are we here?
NOT ENOUGH. WHY NOW?
A critical juncture!
Unmet infrastructure needs
Permit requirements

Inability or unwillingness to pay the bill
Unmet infrastructure needs, and permit requirements
Inability to pay the bill

DC church leaders demand action and funding for rising water bills, march into council meeting

DC church leaders get discussion with council members after marching into meeting
Inability to pay the bill

ALICE Project

Meeting America’s needs, restoring the promise

51 million U.S. households can’t afford basics
Inability or unwillingness to pay the bill
What’s in our way?
Negative impression, or no impression

Service Address

Account Number 00690
Square/Suffix/Lot 2007/
Impervious Surface Square Footage 2200

Customer Service / Servicio Al Cliente (202) 354-3600
Emergencies / Emergencias: (202) 612-3400

Bill Summary

Billing Date 10/07/10
Previous Balance $92.51
Payments as of 10/06/10 $0.00
Late Fees From Prior Balance $0.00
Outstanding Amount Due $92.51
Total Current Bill $54.50
Total Amount Due - Please Pay by 11/01/10 $147.01

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<th>Meter Number</th>
<th>Prior Read Date</th>
<th>Current Read Date</th>
<th>Number Of Days</th>
<th>Prior Read</th>
<th>Current Read</th>
<th>Usage (CCF)</th>
<th>Usage (Gallons)</th>
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<td>08/31/10</td>
<td>10/05/10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.480</td>
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Drinking Water and Wastewater are not linked
Public doesn’t know the source or the destination..

...of their water AND of their dollars!
Competition for mind share
Competition for mind share
Competition for mind share
Solution 1: Go where your audience is, instead of expecting them to come to you.
Planning helps stretch existing resources and reach more customers.

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<tr>
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<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Key Messages</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>October - December 2022</td>
<td>Streamlining City of Harbour initiatives</td>
<td>One meeting / community group</td>
<td>Commercial Government Stakeholder Committee</td>
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<td>One meeting / community group</td>
<td>City Beautiful HDO Public Participation</td>
<td>One newsletter</td>
<td>City Beautiful HDO (Public) Participants</td>
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Solution 2: Tell your own story. And be authentic.
A utility rebrands, working to regain customer recognition and trust.
1,000 GALLONS OF TAP WATER = $10
BOTTLED WATER = $1,000

drink tap
A far-flung staff refines its elevator pitch
Solution 3: Own your successes.
But share them!
Utilities engage outside their service area
Solution 4: Engage with your peers!
Embed staff with peers to enrich both parties.
Thank you!

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