

REMARKABLE TIP SHEETS



SOLUTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES & SPECIAL DISTRICTS

These **REMARKABLE MUNICIPAL SOLUTIONS** are designed specifically for Government Agencies, Municipalities, & Special Districts so they can be amazing at creating Thriving Communities.

This topic makes for great Staff Trainings and as an Educational Session at your annual Conference. Plus, we can assist you with: *Graphic Design, Staff Mentoring, Interim Leadership, Agency Check-Ups, Board Training & Strategic Planning.*¹

RECREATION PROFESSIONAL

DEFEND REC AS ESSENTIAL

THE “ESSENTIAL” PROBLEM

This Tip Sheet is for those Municipal Agencies that offer Parks and Recreation Services, Programs, & Facilities. Often in these agencies, the P&R functions find themselves battling for Funding, when other Agency Functions (i.e. Police & Fire Services) declare that the P&R functions are “*not really*” Essential. This “*Essential Problem*” then escalates when an Agency is facing Budget Cuts. It vital for P&R staff to make their “*Essential-ness*” known, long before the budgets start getting cut.

DEFENDING RECREATION AS ESSENTIAL

¹ *Let us handle it. We can help you Thrive!*

CONTACT MARK¹

928-278-8035

mark@remarkablerecreation
solutions.com

REMARKABLE
RECREATION SOLUTIONS



EMBRACE THE FULL SCOPE (BEING ESSENTIAL)

SOLUTION 1



Park and Recreation Services, Programs, and Facilities are essential to a thriving community. It is imperative to embrace the full scope of all that we are. It is not about “*what*” we do, rather it is about the “*impact*” we have on our communities.

COMMUNITY SAFETY - - Public Safety, Drowning Prevention, Safe Zones for Kids, Afterschool Programs, Teen Centers, Although sometimes necessary, Incarceration COSTS much more than a teen mentoring program that molds them into Contributing Adults, Involved in “Community Policing”.

HEALTH BENEFITS - - Physical Exercise & Fitness, Healthy Habits, Getting Outdoors, Eating Right, Mental Engagement, Lifelong Learning, Goal Setting, Putting Away Harmful Activities, Healthcare Connections.

SOCIAL BENEFITS - - Belonging, Connecting, Community Pride, Families Together, Neighbors Together, Acts of Kindness.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS - - Property Value Increases, Value Added for Business Recruitment, Jobs/Hiring, Event Vendor Sales Opportunities, Growing Businesses through Sponsorships, Workforce Connections. Also, there are many ways for Parks and Recreation to generate Revenue. [[See Revenue Tip Sheet](#)]

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS - - Green Space, Tree City USA, Urban Forest, Urban Cooling, Protected Natural Habitats, Water Conservation, Outdoors Connections, Nature Learning.

REFERENCES - - There are many studies backing up each topic. Also, NRPA is always collecting more data, which you can see here: <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/>.

CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE¹

(SPEAKING YOUR ESSENTIAL-NESS)

SOLUTION 2



Speak the language of Essential-ness. Our profession’s Brand is not about being “*Fun Facilitators*”, rather it is about creating “*Thriving Communities*”. FD/PA always talk about life/death when budget time comes. Our Branding Message must echo all of those Public Benefits that we provide, including how we save lives. We must always be speaking on the “*Impact*” we have on our communities.

TRACK PERFORMANCE MEASURES¹

(PROVING YOUR ESSENTIAL-NESS)

SOLUTION 3



Back up your message with your Agency’s own real-life data, by setting up an Internal Performance Indicator (KPI’s) Tracking System. This data builds the foundation of your Annual Report, which “*Tells Your Story*”. Be sure to Include both OUTPUTS (*easily countable data*: #Part, Rev, Exp, #Prog Offered, etc.) and OUTCOMES (*benefits to community, such as: improved health, confidence gained, etc.*). See our: “Easy as Pie” Principle.

AGENCY DECISION MAKERS (BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS—PART 1)

SOLUTION 4



Always be crafting better relationships with those Individual “*Decision Makers*” for your Agency. These are the folks who will be making the final decisions about budget allocations: (1) Your Town Administrator/Manager, and/or (2) Your Elected Council/Commission Members. As you build trust and good-faith, you will be sharing the Essential-ness of Parks and Recreation.

DECISION MAKER INFLUENCERS (BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS—PART 2)

SOLUTION 5



Always be crafting better relationships with those Individuals who are influencing the “*Decision Makers*” for your Agency. These are folks who have a lot to say about how Agency Dollars are spent each year: (1) Other Dept Heads (PD/FD/Finance), and (2) Those “*Involved*” Community Stakeholders. Once you have identified these folks, go out of your way to strategically develop these relationships. You will need to “*make it happen*”. Always, be building on this foundation (weekly), sharing the Essential-ness of Parks and Recreation. These efforts will result in a better functioning executive team, as they come to understand your Essential-ness, and provide you with valuable support.

COMMUNICATE WITH THE GROUP (EMBEDDING YOUR ESSENTIAL-NESS)

SOLUTION 6



Create communication lines to regularly speak to the Influencers Group *and* the Decision Maker Group. Always find creative ways to include the data that supports our essential-ness. This can be done at your weekly internal meetings. All presentations and Verbal Updates should include your data and your message. Perhaps do a weekly email about “*How we were Essential this week*”. Definitely include your data and message any time you speak or present in a Public Meeting.

TRAIN YOUR TEAM (AMBASSADORS OF ESSENTIAL-NESS)

SOLUTION 7



Create communication lines to speak to your team, those working inside of Parks and Recreation; making sure they are speaking the language of Essential-ness. Training your team this way creates more Internal Ambassadors of Essential-ness.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (LOOKING OUTWARD)

SOLUTION 8



Looking up from our Decision Makers & their Influencers, we look outward towards our community. We strive to encourage additional community voices to be speaking up for the value of Parks and Recreation, by engaging with our Local Community Groups and External Agency Ambassadors. Our message need to be carried by: every Recreation Event, all Facilities, our Activity Guide, Website, Social Media. This “*external look*” is captured in full detail in the [Community Engagement Tip Sheet](#)

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