Better Results Through Better Service

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Overview

• What is Blueprint Columbus?
• Early Customer Engagement Strategies
• When Plans Become Reality
• Solutions to Customer Challenges
• Better Accommodating Customers
Columbus Goes Green

- Blueprint Columbus is an approach to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows
- Satisfies consent decree from Ohio EPA
  - Sewer overflows – $2.5 billion problem
Blueprint Columbus Pillars

**Green Infrastructure**

Blueprint neighborhoods will have multiple installations of green infrastructure, including rain gardens and/or pervious pavement.

**Lateral Linings**

All homes will be evaluated and receive lateral lining, which significantly reduces basement backups and improve the long-term structure of the pipes.

**Roofwater Redirection**

All homes will be evaluated for roof water/downspout cleaning, repair, and redirection. Improvements will be implemented using homeowner input.

**Voluntary Sump Pump Program**

All single-family or duplex homes which do not currently have a sump pump are eligible to receive a sump pump from the program.
Blueprint Columbus Pillars

Out of sight, out of mind!
Blueprint Columbus Pillars

Has a direct impact on residential streets and right of ways.

Efficiency vs. Effectiveness
(Keeping the Customer in Mind)
Early Customer Engagement

- During conceptual design phase:
  - Community Advisory Panel
  - Road Shows
  - Canvassing
  - Public Meetings

- Initial feedback
  - Positive or Indifferent
    - 97% of Residents Supportive or Neutral
When Plans Become Reality

- Challenges
  - Key stakeholders determined by geography, not interest
  - People don’t think about sewers until there’s a direct impact
  - Not all residents impacted equally
  - Misunderstanding about what the project actually entails
  - Limited trust in government to execute and maintain GI

NOT IN “MY” YARD MENTALITY
“If they want to do an experiment, do it somewhere else -- not on these homes. I am seriously considering moving.”

“They are forcing this on us, and they say it’s not on our property. I put so much time into my garden and my home.”

“I don’t like big government telling me what to do.”

“How can they claim the value of your property will go up when you have a toxic waste collector in the front yard? They’ve run these down the residents’ throats without looking at the long-term effect.”

Some North Linden residents join those concerned over city’s rain-garden plans

Dumbest Columbus Controversy: The Clintonville Rain Gardens

As a Columbus resident, what are some of your top concerns in your neighborhood? Rising rents and home prices? Police brutality? Opioid use? For Clintonville home owners last summer, the answer was rain gardens. As part of the city’s Blueprint Columbus plan to prevent storm water from flooding sewers and polluting rivers, gardens were installed along sidewalks. Nevermind that the project is allowing the city to save $1 billion and meet EPA requirements; they aren’t pretty, the residents said. From “ditches” to “eyesores” to “unsightly toxic dumps,” people tossed off colorful descriptors to reporters investigating the issue. “There’s so much change going on in Clintonville that it’s making people nervous,” one resident told the Dispatch. There goes the neighborhood. – Erica Thompson
The BIG Question
So, how do you keep the customer first when the customer is not happy or cooperative?
Solutions

1) Be explicit in how residents will be impacted

• Canvassed each house with general Blueprint info
• Invited residents to 2 public meetings

3 Tiers of Contact:
A. Letter mailed to EVERYONE in project area
B. Postcard mailed to ANYONE who will be affected by construction
C. Door knock/door tag for ALL affected directly by green infrastructure installations
Solutions

2) Make it difficult to ignore

Future Rain Garden Site

Please contact the City of Columbus for more information
Phone: 614-645-1253 | Email: blueprint@columbus.gov
www.columbus.gov/blueprint
### Solutions

3) Engage people early, engage people often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT MILESTONE</th>
<th>IMPLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Surveying</td>
<td>“Why are these people taking photos of my house? They must be trying to rob me!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% Design</td>
<td>“Hey, my neighborhood could really use a sidewalk!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>60% Design</td>
<td>“Can you shrink the size of this rain garden so there is space to put in a walkway to my house?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>90% Design</td>
<td>“When will construction start and what is that going to look like?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>“What is happening?”</td>
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Overview of Customer Engagement

- Hotline
- Interactive Website
- Email
- Site Visits
- Public Meetings
  - 30%, 60%, and 90%
- Social Media
- Neighborhood Etiquette Trainings
- Construction Updates
- Plant Selection
- Mailings – Costs Around $35,000 Per Year (Mailing 66,966 Pieces This Upcoming Year)
Finding the Right Message

1) Lead with individual benefits and develop messages that speak to different value systems

2) Make information available and easy to obtain

Blueprint includes $959 M in renewed infrastructure:

\[ \frac{1}{2} \text{ Goes towards Lateral Lining} \quad \text{\$453 million benefit to Homeowners} \]
Finding the Right Message

3) Use a wide variety of messengers

4) Design your process to be flexible and encourage feedback – and then DO something with that feedback!
Keep the Conversation Going

• Use social media to share fun facts and continuously educate stakeholders
• Provide regular updates on the project and processes
• Share successes – testimonials, evaluation data, etc.
Countering Misinformation

• Word of Mouth
• Media Opportunities
• Engaging on Social Media

‘Over my dead body’: Rain-garden rage continues
Recap: Changes to Better Accommodate Our Customers

• Increase Resident and Property Specific Outreach
• Alter Communication
  o More Direct and Specific Messaging
    o Reduces Confusion Regarding a Complex Project
• Proactive Neighborhood Engagement
  o Friends of Blueprint
• Feedback Process is Key