



Proactive Constituent Communications

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Our Conversation

**When it comes to communications,
our single most important goal is
to gain the trust of community
members.**

Everything else is secondary.



It's all about trust...

We can gain trust in three ways:

- “ Improve discourse through education
- “ Seek to engage
- “ Get ahead of challenges

Improve Discourse

Let's be honest...

Most community members know very little about public finance.

But that doesn't stop them from seeing themselves as experts.

Improve Discourse

Our obligation...

We have an obligation to do our best to educate community members *and the media* about public finance.



Improve Discourse

**This is worth the investment of time
and may be easier than you think.**

Think beyond what you already may
be doing to inform community
members.



Improve Discourse

Considerõ

**A one-page budget creation
handout**

Improve Discourse

Considerõ

A short video that explains, in simple terms, the budget timeline

Improve Discourse

Considerõ

A frequently asked questions document that anticipates questions and answers them completely

Improve Discourse

Considerõ

**An early morning meeting in which
you explain the budgeting
process to business leaders in
the community**



Improve Discourse

Considerõ

An informational briefing with your local newspaper reporter (who probably knows very little about the budget creation process)

Improve Discourse

The key is to inform as many people as you can about public finance and to do so on an ongoing basis.

Seek to Engage

Start with “Why?”

%What?+and %How?+come later.



Seek to Engage

- 1. Connect with community members on their terms.**
- 2. Provide more information, not less.**
- 3. Provide feedback loops.**

Get Ahead of Challenges

The fact is that if you don't explain your organization's financial challenges, somebody else will explain them for you...

o and they will get them wrong.



Get Ahead of Challenges

No one likes surprises.



Get Ahead of Challenges

Be specific about challenges, but don't be overly dramatic.

When possible, speak to future challenges rather than something you must react to immediately.

Use clear language that you repeat.



Remember the most important thing...

Seek integrity first.



Thank you!

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