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We Help Communities Thrive | June 2019



Message From Doug

As most of you are winding down your projects and preparing for summer holidays, I want to leave you with some food for thought: **What does regional collaboration mean to you?** Unfortunately, I often see neighbouring communities in competition with each other, competing for funding, for business and even residents. However, I have seen much more success come from communities that combine their efforts and leverage their uniqueness to be stronger as a region. Over the summer, I ask you to think about ways that you can team with a neighbour community to strengthen a project, event or strategy.

Stay tuned for more information on our September Webinar where we will cover this topic in more detail.

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In a world where we are constantly told and sold the idea that it is a dog eat dog world where we must each fend for ourselves, where competition has caused us to neglect collaboration, in fear of losing to someone else, our greatest power comes from each other. Every community is trying to find ways to grow and survive for themselves, but when we let go of our fear of our neighbours beating us, we can realize that we are stronger together. It has been said over and over, and should never be forgotten, that communities need to find what makes them unique. If communities come together as a team, they could leverage their uniqueness together to become stronger as a region.

Though the idea of teamwork isn't new, it's taught to us early on as children, it seems to be a more difficult concept to enact as we grow up. There needs to be a shift in the mentality for it to work. Instead of viewing ourselves as a lone wolf, we must embrace a pack mentality, where the whole becomes more than the collective parts. We must realize that our problems, the changes in the country and the world that are having a direct effect on us, are not solely affecting our community, but many. These challenges are not set to the borders of one town, they span across the region, carrying a toll for all. But if we do not see this widespread effect, and rather believe we must bear all the weight on our shoulders alone, we will surely break under the load. But together, as a collective, as a team, we can disperse that weight and it becomes manageable, something we can work on.

By working together, we can bring something to the table and compete against the rest of the world. We can hold our own, together. This has never been more important than right now, as change is coming at an increasingly fast pace, and we cannot adapt as individual communities quick enough to keep up, nor can we take advantage of the opportunities that these changes can present. The challenges we face as a province and as a country affect many cities, and these cities, with the correct mentality, can influence the country. By standing together, we can form an incredible force, capable of tackling real change while also exploring the good that can come from some of that change as well.

With the changes in provincial and federal government affecting everything from healthcare to education to employment, it is critically important that we see municipalities coming together to represent and speak up for their communities, and to ensure they play a pivotal role in the changes that directly impact their people, workforces, and housing. Many people, especially during high political climates such as elections, say they feel like their opinions don't matter because their voice goes unheard. But when that one voice joins the thousands of others in their surrounding area, that power and strength is undeniable and irrefutable. We must acknowledge that everyone has something to bring to the table, and when we realize this and act on it, only then will we see real positive change towards a better whole.

Together, we can create our own opportunities and be catalysts for change on a widespread platform. A single voice can get lost in the noise, but a unified voice can shake the walls and gain the attention of many. The moment we are able to realize that our neighbour is not our enemy or our competition, that they are our ally, is the moment we see growth and success in each community and regions.

Tip of the Month:

How to leverage Regional Collaboration to Market your Community

One example of regional collaboration is widening your reach to citizens by leveraging a neighboring region's marketing resources to promote a local community event or campaign. This is also referred to as "Alliance Marketing" where two or more organizations share strategies, contacts, media platforms etc.



Benefits of Alliance Marketing include:

1. Gain access to a new market or greater pool of potential customers/community members
2. Reduce cost by sharing resources
3. Learn new marketing strategies and techniques that can be applied to your own region/community
4. Turn a "competing" region into a partner or ally by returning the favour when they promote events or campaigns.

Mandan, North Dakota - June 17/18

Redwater, AB - June 20

Whati, NWT - July 25

SARP - SK - September 12

Victoria, BC - October 1

Kelowna, BC - October 3

Fredricton, NB - October 5

Fort McMurray, AB - October 7



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