

The War of Words and the Battle for your Brand

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CONGRATULATIONS - NOW WHAT?

- ✓ Making the transition from individual candidate to a County brand ambassador
- ✓ From promoting yourself to promoting a County
- ✓ From your individual brand to Board wholeness
- ✓ From a single voice to one Board voice

64 COUNTIES - OUR COMMON GROUND

- An arm of the state governed by statute
- Providing common statutory services
- Need the public trust to successfully govern

64 COUNTIES - VAST DIFFERENCES

- Among our differences:
 - Economies
 - Resources/Assets
 - Spending priorities/Competing needs
 - Demographics
 - Politics
- And this informs Communications Strategy

TWO COUNTIES BY THE NUMBERS

Douglas County

- Square Miles: 843
 - Total Population: 373,275
 - Five (5) Municipalities
 - Population: 157,275
 - Professional, scientific, technical services
 - Unincorporated area
 - Population 216,000

Weld County

- Square Miles: 4,016
 - Total Population: 340,018
 - 32 Municipalities
 - Population 280,018
 - Oil & Gas exploration, agriculture, manufacturing
 - Unincorporated area
 - Population: 60,000

64 COUNTIES - OUR COMMON CHALLENGES

- Serve a public with a diminishing appetite for civic engagement and low trust in government
- Lifted-up when one of us succeeds, biased universally when one of us fails
- Disagreements among our elected officials - a distraction from governance and the brand
- Struggle to protect our brand *and* reputation - an intangible asset with a tangible ROI

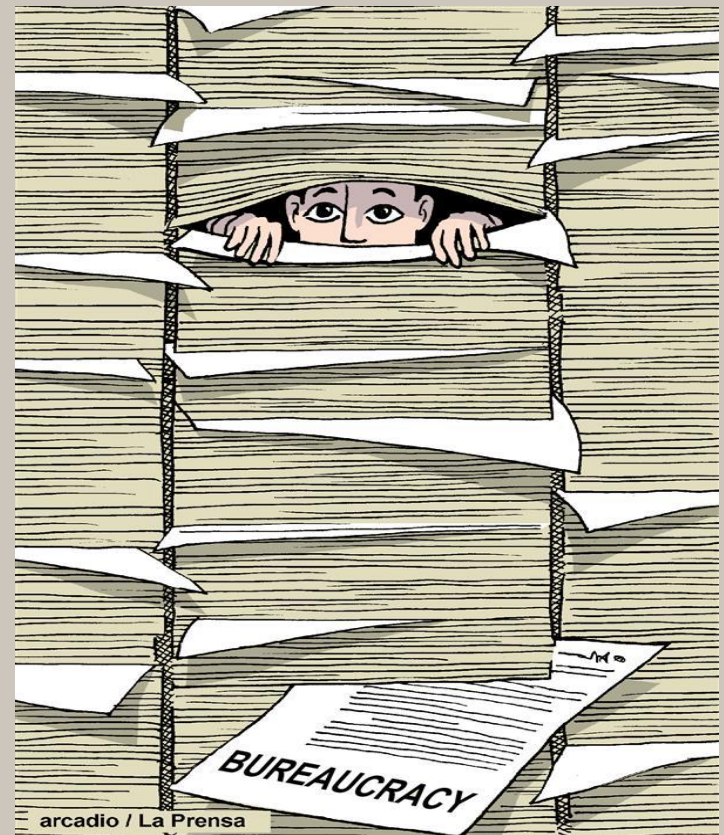
TODAY'S FOCUS

- What unites us and provides us with the common ground thru which we govern and serve
- Sharing the unexpected excellence of County Government in the public interest
- Communicating transparently by catching constituents where they already are.

Public Perception of Government



Search ID: prin18
Democrats and Republicans enter
into yet another intellectual
debate about the issues



Public Trust in Local Government

Trust in Local Government is at an all-time low.....

- While higher than the federal and state government, trust in local government is at 66% the lowest since 1997

***2021 Gallup Poll**

Government/Media Fuel Cycle of Distrust

- Government leaders & journalists are the world's least trusted societal leaders today
- Less than half of all respondents' trust:
 - Journalists (46%)
 - Government leaders (42%)
 - Social Media (37%)

***2022 Edelman Trust Barometer**

SO....Who Do our Constituents Trust??

GOOD NEWS:

Our Circles of Trust are now more localized

- 77% trust their employer
- 74% trust their co-workers AND
- 62% trust their neighbors/people in their community

***2022 Edelman Trust Barometer**

Distrust: Society's Default Emotion

- 64% agree “people in this country lack the ability to have constructive and civil debates about issues on which they disagree”
- When distrust is the default, peaceful debate is difficult

***2022 Edelman Trust Barometer**

YOUR QUESTION

- How do I cut through the digital noise, level the playing field and manage my brand and reputation?

TELL YOUR OWN STORY

The greatest commandment of storytelling:

- ✓ Humanize the role of government
- ✓ Feature the public benefit of your service
- ✓ Connect what people care about with the role of government in their lives

MAKE ME CARE

Where do I find my stories?

- Stories are found in in your:
 - Budget book/spending priorities
 - Public meeting agendas/decisions
 - Ongoing successes with service delivery
 - Legislative actions on behalf of the community
 - New programs/projects/initiatives/services

Where do I Tell My Stories?

Become your own Publisher

- Every Colorado County has a website
 - Turn your website into a storytelling machine
 - Create an online newsroom and then
 - Create an email subscription tool and add subscribers who receive your news directly
 - Tell your story DIRECT to your citizens and taxpayers via email

Who/Where is your Audience

Mobile Devices and Communications

- 97% of Americans own a cell phone of some kind
- 85% of Americans own a smartphone, specifically

*** 2013 –2021 Pew Research**

Who/Where is your Audience

Reading Habits:

- They don't like to read!
- The average American spends about 20 minutes reading (daily)
- Age 75+ most avid readers at almost 1 hour daily
- Ages 15 – 19 read for about 8 minutes per day on average

***2021 Statista February**

Who/Where is your Audience?

Social Media

- Only one-in-five U.S. adults (23%) say they use Twitter
- 97% of Tweets are produced by 25% of users
- The larger share of U.S. adults are here:
 - YouTube (81%)
 - Facebook (69%)
 - Instagram (40%)

* 2013 –2021 Pew Research

Storytelling and Social Media

- NEXTDOOR: our favorite social media tool
- <https://nextdoor.com/city/feed/>



SPEAKING OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Are You a Noise-Maker or a Peacemaker?

- While there is an allure to being a noise maker rather than a peacemaker.....

DON'T TAKE THE BAIT!!!

Social Media 101: Don't Feed the Trolls



Summary: Information Consumption

- Our constituents are impatient scanners and scoopers of news
- Distracted and impatient – they prefer brevity and visuals
- Know where your constituents are – and their communications preferences
- They trust one another – have conversations where they are

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Ammunition in the War of Words

- Lead with *optimism, courage, and authenticity*
- *Believe* in your County – in Colorado Counties – and your people
- No matter how dire the situation – in your war of words – your ammunition --- your weapons of choice are YOUR *stories of service*
- Rise above the noise
- Control you own narrative

LESSONS LEARNED - IN THE WAR OF WORDS:

- Focus with purpose on telling your story and level the playing field
- Know the locations where your people already are
- Lead authentically through the lens of complete dedication to your WHY and act first in the public interest; and
- Create, celebrate and communicate the unexpected excellence of County Government

Ignite Your PURPOSE

“Stop being afraid of what could go wrong and stay excited about what could go right.”

Tony Robbins