

Packaging and Implementing a Financial Plan

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What came out of these workshops is salesmanship. When marketing a product, the product basically has to be credible. Constituencies and interested sectors must be educated. Not just the general assembly, state legislature, or city council, but all groups—social, economic, political, business; and so forth. The media must also be involved; there must also be an attempt to control the informed, unreliable source that feeds the media. Government officials and their staffs must be kept informed. Good, strong, hard controls must be kept on what is being said about projects. People who run briefing sessions and those who have contact with the public should be identified.

There are two schools of thought regarding revenue sources. One is that politicians have their own ideas of what is usable and serviceable, what can pass and what cannot, and what they can trade in the future. This says there is a better chance if the person in charge does the front-end thinking and gives them something they can look at and compare with other proposals. Members of general assemblies and city councils are overworked, so it is necessary to get to know these people on the state, city, and county levels; to help them go through the process; and to make it easier and more understandable for them to see why they should vote the way you think they should. By giving them ideas on specifics, they can be convinced why the project or the process you want is important and good. Give them something to take back to the district; identify the people who have a vested interest in the issue and get to them early and often. Don't just try to sell them. Find out what they want, and build the reasons and rationale on how

you can get around their objections or convert them to your ideas.

There was discussion about establishing a funding level. One way, which is a little risky, is to pad the proposal and then horse trade. This has been done before, but a certain credibility problem develops when a project is always 30 to 40 percent less than the proposal. A sensitivity develops in the state house, the general assembly, the city council, and among the voters and taxpayers. A real, tight, livable, honest, and defensible budget has a better chance.

The private sector has to be able to identify the cost and benefit relationship if it is to be enticed into supporting the project. They will not support you if they don't feel the project will have a positive impact on their bottom line, increase their profits, or enhance the business environment.

When creating a policy, be prepared to live with it for a long time. More important, be prepared to live with the free enterprise system. A lot of competitors are competing for that same business joint venture. Be sensitive to what is going on with the voter, and be prepared to deliver.

The four workshops reflect what is perceived as a revolution. During the depression, the nation became disillusioned with the private enterprise system, and we developed two sectors—the public and private sectors. We are now merging the two. The public sector has operated independently and has not had to respond to the marketplace. The private sector must now become socially conscious while the public sector must become responsive to the profit motive and think more the way the private sector does.