

Practice Name:**Date Created:** 26-May-09**Author:****Last Updated:****Abstract:****GENERAL INFORMATION**

Name of Practice	Centre City Congress
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Name of Municipality	City of Calgary
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THE ISSUE**Abstract:**

What is the practice you developed or are developing (brief abstract)?

Please briefly describe the final practice developed. (e.g. if you developed a new Council agenda, list the agenda

items, or if a new communications plan was created, provide a summary of the plan's goals, objectives and highlights.)

The Centre City Implementation business unit created a new conference format in hosting their inaugural congress in order to separately and cooperatively respect the individual needs, ability to respond and level of involvement of partners and stakeholders. (3 parts: call to action (networking evening), stakeholder working session, and administration day) with the following objectives:

1. To be a catalyst for change and create a climate of excitement about the future of the Centre City.
2. To update stakeholders and the public on actions taken on the Centre City Plan (approved in May 2007) This included release of an on-line report card.
3. To develop priorities for actions by the City and others this involved best practice presentations, opinion machines and polling, and commitment to action.
4. To update the City on actions planned by others and align projects and partners.
5. To celebrate the commitment of the City, agencies, business and community in implementing, enhancing and sustaining the Centre City. This included commitment to new ways of communicating (blogs, networks, etc) and a call to action.

Need:

Please describe (just a couple of sentences or bullet points) why you needed to create this practice (policy or process).

What issue made it necessary? (e.g. "We needed a comprehensive plan to deal with...", or "We needed an annual forecasting tool because...")

In order to reach the vision of the Centre City plan there is a need to move stakeholders from a position of advising the City or responding to plans to shared accountability and action to realize the vision. In a bold initiative to ensure the Centre City moved from plan to action, the Centre City Implementation Business Unit was created and one of their first deliverables was the congress. It was meant to advance the vision and generate momentum and involvement while delivering on action and implementation in an integrated and cooperative manner.

CREATING YOUR PRACTICE

Research:

How did you obtain information to help design your practice (including consultation with stakeholders, formal and informal research)?

Please include any research documentation you can share, or give us a source reference (e.g. Web site, literature,

“We reviewed the bylaws from other municipalities in the area...”).

1. We developed an extensive list of potential participants and surveyed them as to their expectations for action in the Centre City.
2. We researched best practice information from other cities as it related to their downtowns.
3. We accessed excellent speakers.
4. We gathered information from stakeholders on the approach that should be taken at the congress itself.
5. We prepared a visual report card on the actions taken by the city and displays on projects in progress.
6. We researched effective ways of gathering on-the-spot feedback from stakeholders (opinion machines provided instant feedback).
7. We set up the web page and a blog (one of the first for a municipality) to encourage on-going feedback on the congress and Centre City issues.

Information can be accessed at:
www.calgary.ca/centrecity
 topics of discussion can also be viewed on the blog: www.centrecitytalk.com

Process:

How did you go about designing your practice? For instance, did you create a team, hire a consultant, borrow something ready-made from another jurisdiction?

Describe briefly who did the design work and what process they followed.

1. Created an advisory team and operational committee.
2. Hired an event planner.
3. Contracted media support.
4. Worked with each presenter to match presentations to opinion questions and report card.
5. Created displays.
6. Set up on-going communication links and networks to move forward.
7. Developed and constantly evaluated communication and engagement strategies.

GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE

Authority:

Whose/what approval did you need to create and implement the practice?

Council approved the concept of congress as part of the Centre City plan.

Senior Management approved the report card content.

Director of Centre City Implementation approved operational details.

Reporting:

How did you inform the decision-maker(s) about the practice and your need for their approval?

Approved as part of Centre City Plan and the establishment of the Centre City business unit.

Please note the name of any documents provided to the decision-makers that you would be willing to share.

Consultation:

Stakeholders both external and internal have been an integral part of both the development of the Centre City Plan and the Centre City congress.

Did you consult with stakeholders as part of your approval process?

If so, how? If possible, attach a copy of templates, surveys or other documents you used as part of your consultation.

A copy of the stakeholder pre-surveys will be forwarded under separate cover.

A copy of the results to on-site questionnaires can be accessed at:
www.calgary.ca/centrecity

IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE

Plan:

Describe the process you went through to implement the practice. If you used an implementation plan, please note it here.

- Advisory committee
- Event planner and event plan
- Timelines, schedules and checklists

Policy:

What changes to bylaws, regulations or procedures were needed to implement this practice and how did you deal with them?

The only changes were in process, procedures and protocols of communications - particularly as it related to development of the report card and blog.

Please attach a copy of the change in bylaw, policy or procedure.

When:

When did your municipality begin to use the practice? Was it implemented all at once or in stages?

Congress planning - September 2007 to February 2008
Congress - February 27 and 28 2008,
Administration day, March 4 2008
Blog launched February 27 2008 (see Mayor's video on web page)
On-going congress evaluation - results posted to web, continuing impact to business plans.

Who:

Who was responsible for implementing the practice?

Dave Breckon - CCI Director
Candy Lannan - CCI Manager, Business and Policy Planning
Lorna Wallace - CCI Project Manager event planner and committee responsible for implementation

If someone else is responsible for ongoing management, who is it?

CCI Manager, Business and Policy Planning responsible for on-going management and deliverables (report card, impact to business plans, etc.)

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Budget:

2008 costs <\$150,000

How much did it cost you to design and implement your practice (i.e. We saved/spent \$XX per year)?

As we move forward, consideration is being given to shared cost with stakeholders, sponsorship, etc.

What are your ongoing operational and capital costs, if any?

Staff:

What human resources did you need to design, implement and manage your practice? (e.g. "It took X staff member (s) X months on this" or "This is part of normal staff duties.")

It was added to regular duties - estimated at 20% of staff time for two positions for 3 months. Limited administration support, contracted event planner and media support - other staff time part of normal staff duties.

Infrastructure:

What "capital costs" (such as information technology, other equipment or building assets) did you need to design, implement, manage, and/or evaluate your practice?

No capital costs, however IT technical support needed for project.

EVALUATING YOUR PRACTICE**Formal:**

If you did a formal evaluation (e.g. user satisfaction survey, analysis of annual expenditures or number of rate payers served) for your practice, please describe the evaluation tool and the process used.

All congress delegates used opinion machines on the second day (February 28 2008). Results are on web page www.calgary.ca/centrecity

Tell us who was involved.

Administrative evaluation report prepared.

Informal:

If you did an informal evaluation, describe what you did (such as discussing the practice with people in the office or on the street, or letters/comments received).

Feedback solicited on the blog (minimal).

Congress has been discussed at many meetings with stakeholders and other groups.

Performance measures:

Please list the performance measures for this practice (i.e. reduced number of complaints, money saved, or change in equipment life expectancy.)

Informal - impact to business plans, increased communication, improved network.

Please list the process you used for measuring performance, (i.e. We do annual surveys on...) examples include:

- collecting data
- establishing a baseline
- applying the measures
- results
- follow up

Project team will be doing pre-survey before next congress, registration survey, on-site polling and follow-up.

Changes:

(a) Based on the evaluation (formal or informal), describe any changes you have made, or would like to make, to

your practice as a result. (e.g. “After implementing this practice, we decided that it would be better if...”)

-or-

(b) Has your practice met your expectations and if so, how?

First night: high profile networking was very effective - will leave it as it is. Also making sure to have some kind of a major release of document or information in order to increase media interest.

Second day: working session - will attempt to increase number of external delegates from business, community and social agencies. We will also focus on what they are doing in support of the Centre City vision.

Third day: administration day will be changed. Need decision-makers in room.

LESSONS LEARNED / BENEFITS RECEIVED

Benefits:

What are the benefits of this practice to your municipality? (eg. Preparation of Council agenda packages now requires less time, etc.)

Feedback on all Centre City projects/issues can be received via one engagement - rather than each business unit or project holding separate activities.

Increased networking and support from external stakeholders that will result in strategic partnerships, alternate funding etc.

Alignment of corporate, business and community projects.

Congress is seen as action- not plan-oriented which is of benefit to reputation management.

Key Lessons:

What key lessons have you/your municipality learned through the process of:

- designing;
- obtaining approval;
- implementing; and
- evaluating your practice?

1. The importance of individual contacts/network to get the stakeholders you want in attendance (some were contacted 5 to 6 times).
2. The importance of high profile speakers (Mayor and Carol Coletta to attract people to the call to action evening).

Include any problems, surprises, and unanticipated benefits. (e.g. “We realized that we needed to spend more time...”)

3. The importance of networking time - plan sufficient time in schedule.
4. The importance of establishing the impact of people coming and going to the on-site research in advance so that people commit to the whole time period.

Advice to Municipal Peers:

What advice would you give to another municipality that is considering adopting your practice? Is there anything you might have done differently?

We concentrated on Centre City businesses, social agencies and community - as a go forward we have to establish the importance of the Centre City to Calgary as a whole.

Be very clear that a congress is a working/input session not an educational conference.

PRACTICE UPDATES

New Information:

There may be some new information to add since this practice was first posted. This is especially true if:

- a new process has been implemented in your municipality;
- there are new practice evaluation results; or
- there has been a change affecting organizational direction. For example, explain how new economic conditions or a new vision/strategy affect the practice.

Please indicate those changes here. Don't forget to list any new documents that may be useful to your peers. Then go to "Other Information" to attach the new documents.

The report card has been updated once and is now being updated again based on business plans and budgets.

Delegates liked this visual format so much that discussion is now underway to jointly develop (corporate, business, agency, associations) a State of the Centre City report for release at the next congress.

OTHER INFORMATION

Suggestions:

Please list relevant information sources that others might use or you would be willing to share (courses, Web sites, literature, experts).

www.calgary.ca/centrecity
www.centrecitytalk.com

Documents & Attachments:

Please attach (using the "Browse" button below) any documents you would be willing to share with others interested in your practice (e.g. a bylaw, a policy, approval documents, templates).

* Note: If you do not have an electronic copy of a document, please send Municipal Excellence a paper copy for scanning to:

Alberta Municipal Affairs
Municipal Excellence Network
17th Floor, Commerce Place
10155-102 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5J 4L4

Nominations:

Do you have any suggestions of other individuals or municipalities with municipal practices that we should

add to the Municipal Excellence network? Please list their practice, municipality, and contact information.

Or, e-mail menet@gov.ab.ca and let us know about a municipal colleague that has a really good way of doing things.

COMMENTS

Have we missed something; anything you'd like to add to the areas we have touched on, or an area we have not mentioned?

The establishment of the Centre City Implementation business unit with its first deliverable as the congress was an innovative way to ensure engagement, alignment and shared accountability for action in a geographic area.