

The Schoodic Arts Festival – Art of Community Revitalization

10 Commandments



Know your audience. All of you who are my audience today, are professionals and know these best practices for your organization. Here are a few of the things that I hold on high. These are the items that my interns use as their code of behavior.

1. Thou shalt Hold the Mission upon High.

1.1 All things come back to Mission. How do we best serve the mission? It is the conclusive test of the value of a new idea.

2. Thou shalt Listen to the Members of the Community, for they are omnipotent.

2.1 Members of our community identify with our organization and support us for a variety of reasons. Some support us because they love our mission, some support us because they love that we restored beloved buildings. Find out why your people love you. It may surprise you. Value their ideas.

3. Thou shalt Seize Opportunities presented by thy Followers.

3.1 How better to bring someone into the family than to give him or her an integral role in the formation of the works of the organization. All of our ongoing community programs came from the members of our community who came to me and said, "I have a great idea!". Our job is to make their ideas become reality. What do we have that they need? Critical Mass, marketing, office support. What do they have that we need? Ideas and commitment.

4. Thou shalt Do good work and blessings will be rained upon you.

4.1 Be all that you say you would be, and do all that you said you would do, and you will have proved the value of your organization to those who know you. The rest of your good work will follow. Careful judgement, balance, thoughtfulness, and practicing the Golden Rule to constituents, staff, interns, board, will yield high returns.

5. Thou shalt Be an Active part of the Community for the Community will support you in all ways.

5.1 Are you more than your physical plant? Do you extend your arms to reach beyond? Do you ask, "What can we do for you"? Some say success is, "It's who you know...". I say, "It's who knows YOU". Develop trust relationships with the members of the Chamber of Commerce, the local civic groups, and other organizations that do work that is related to your work.

6. Thou shalt Treat Everyone who comes through your door as though each are the most important person on earth.

6.1 Do you train your staff and interns to stand up and greet everyone that comes in? Do you stop what you are doing (even when it's not convenient) to give your full attention to your visitor? You never know who will become the most important person on earth to your organization. Really, - you never know.

7. Thou shalt Treat donors and volunteers as if they are a deity.

7.1 This is gratitude, not pandering. Have you noticed that volunteers are almost always donors? When our fundraising letters says, "We can't do it without you" we mean it.

8. Thou shalt go forth and sow your oats among the fields, though some seeds will fall upon the rocks, many will germinate and be fruitful.

8.1 Be generous about trying new ideas. Some may become the best thing you do. Other ideas may fail, but this is how you learn about your strengths. Try to get the most gain from the appropriate amount of work. Take a chance, but manage the risk.

9. Thou shalt be humble and seek improvements, for this is the way to enlightenment.

9.1 It's hard to take suggestions for improvement, especially when you think you have done something perfectly. If one person makes a suggestion, chances are that others have a similar comment but have not stepped forward to tell you. I sometimes have to bite my tongue to keep myself from saying, "But we have always done it that way". Doing it differently is never easy, but creative solutions often make our work stronger. Personal Ego never won.

10. Thou shalt radiate kindness, grace, patience, and competence, for these will manifest themselves in the fullness of time.

10.1 Have you ever had a difficult client? Have you worked hard to make that client your best friend? Has it paid off? Someone once told me if you lose a customer, you lose 50. They tell all their friends! If someone is unhappy, sit next to them and have a talk. Often our customers only want to be heard. Insuring that they feel respected will bring them further into the family. Have you ever had a cough client? Made friends? Then found that they become a top donor? You never know . . .

Steps to take for implementation of a great idea;

1. Will our constituents respond to this? Is it in alignment with our work and our mission?
2. Do we have a person to take the lead on this? The person who had the initial idea is usually ideal.
3. How can we get a sufficient attendance? How do we market it? what are the financial and workload implications?

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