KEEP CALM: ENGAGE ON

A STORY ABOUT MAKING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MORE ACCESSIBLE WITH CITY OF GOODYEAR, AZ

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FEEDBACK
Is one-way, with the resident providing information and expertise.

OUTREACH
Is one-way, with the municipality providing information and expertise.

ENGAGEMENT
Is two-way, with both parties providing information and expertise.

THE VALUE OF ENGAGEMENT

MEET TOM
(Topics on the Move), a unique engagement tool deployed in the City of Goodyear, to collect public input where stakeholders are found.

TOM IS:
Versatile
Easy-to-Use
Able to Go Lots of Places
Spontaneous
Self-Contained
Simple
Accessible
Exciting
A Smile-Maker

LEARN MORE:
View the Webinar
>See the Slides
>Try the Worksheet
See TOM's Inspiration
>Here & >Here
How did you manage questions related to writing on a city vehicle?
We worked closely with vendors to test materials to make sure they were writable and would be easy to maintain with a long life. We always have staff on-site to interact with people and ensure it’s not a free-for-all. Generally, we didn’t get a lot of feedback from people that this was going to be a problem.

How do you deal with inappropriate comments?
We bring an eraser with us, but so far, there have not been any. TOM tends to attract kids more, then we can talk to the adults as the kids write and draw.
Vandalism of TOM was a big concern. TOM is kept at fleet when not in use, so we remove that temptation to vandalize him after hours.

How long from ideation to implementation?
Four months – it was a pretty rapid development. Identifying a vehicle went quickly, then we simply had to find a wrap vendor. The cost was small enough that we didn’t need extra approval.

How do you define exposure and what makes up the 22,000 exposures TOM has had?
Tom is a brand for the City. So, whenever people see him, they get an impression that the City is open, accessible, and interested in what citizens have to say. Therefore, we count the number of people at an event, not just those who write or pick up material.
As a brand, TOM may need two or three impressions before someone develops comfortability to approach.

Why do you give away air fresheners?
The fresheners are in the shape of a van – a mini-TOM. Fresheners are practical, they have a long lifespan, and they tie into our issue of mobility.
We try to elevate the personality of TOM. We refer to him as a “him”. He is a partner with the City. So, with our gift, we were looking to reinforce the personality of TOM.

How do you reach multi-lingual residents?
We haven’t gotten there yet. We don’t have a large multi-lingual population in our community. But we do tailor our approach to the community we are trying to reach, so if we did seek multi-lingual input, we’d make sure we had a multi-lingual staff member in-person with TOM.

How do you use TOM on social media?
We don’t yet. But we have thought about starting a TOM Twitter but we don’t have the capacity yet to ensure we’d have enough content.

What’s next for TOM and the City of Goodyear for engagement?
We hope TOM gets used more frequently. We have a list of uses for TOM directors put together at the start of the project. Now that the weather is favorable (in Arizona), we’ll reapproach these directors to remind them about their suggested uses.
We’ll be using TOM to drive up use of the City of Goodyear app. We’ve been making a list of places that will have a high percentage of local attendees, places like grocery stores. We’ve thought of pre-promoting events such as door tags a few days before a neighborhood conversation.
As a new tool, TOM will take a little while to become part of the culture - to become part of the go-to toolkit to engage with the public. So, we need to lead by example while also lobbying internally and celebrate