

The Art and Science of Systematic Consent-Building

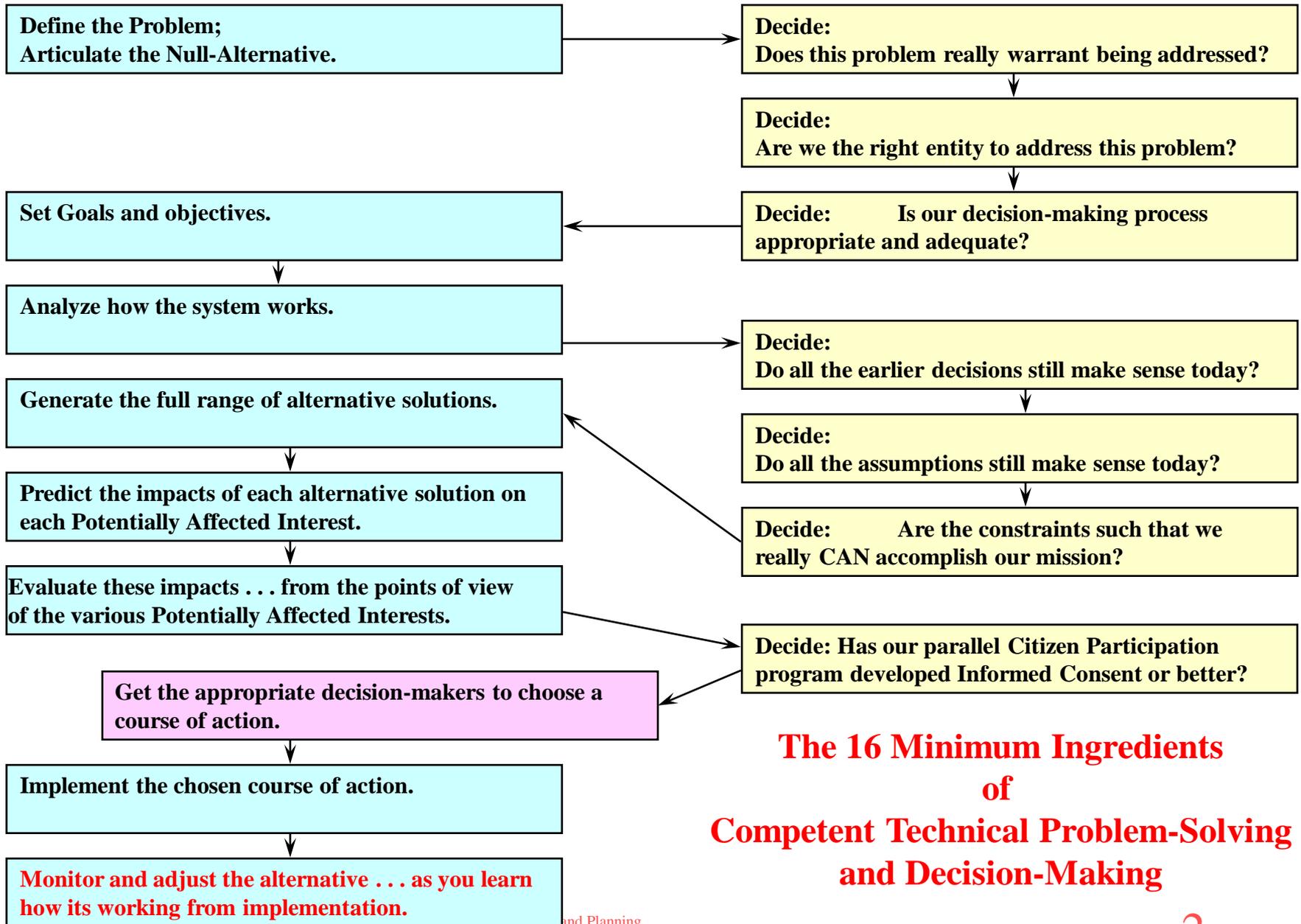
by Hans, Annemarie, and Jennifer Bleiker

“SDIC/CPO”: a Management Strategy

for **Getting Controversial**

- Projects
- Programs
- Plans
- Regulations
- Bond Issues
- & other Legitimate Proposals by Public Agencies

IMPLEMENTED



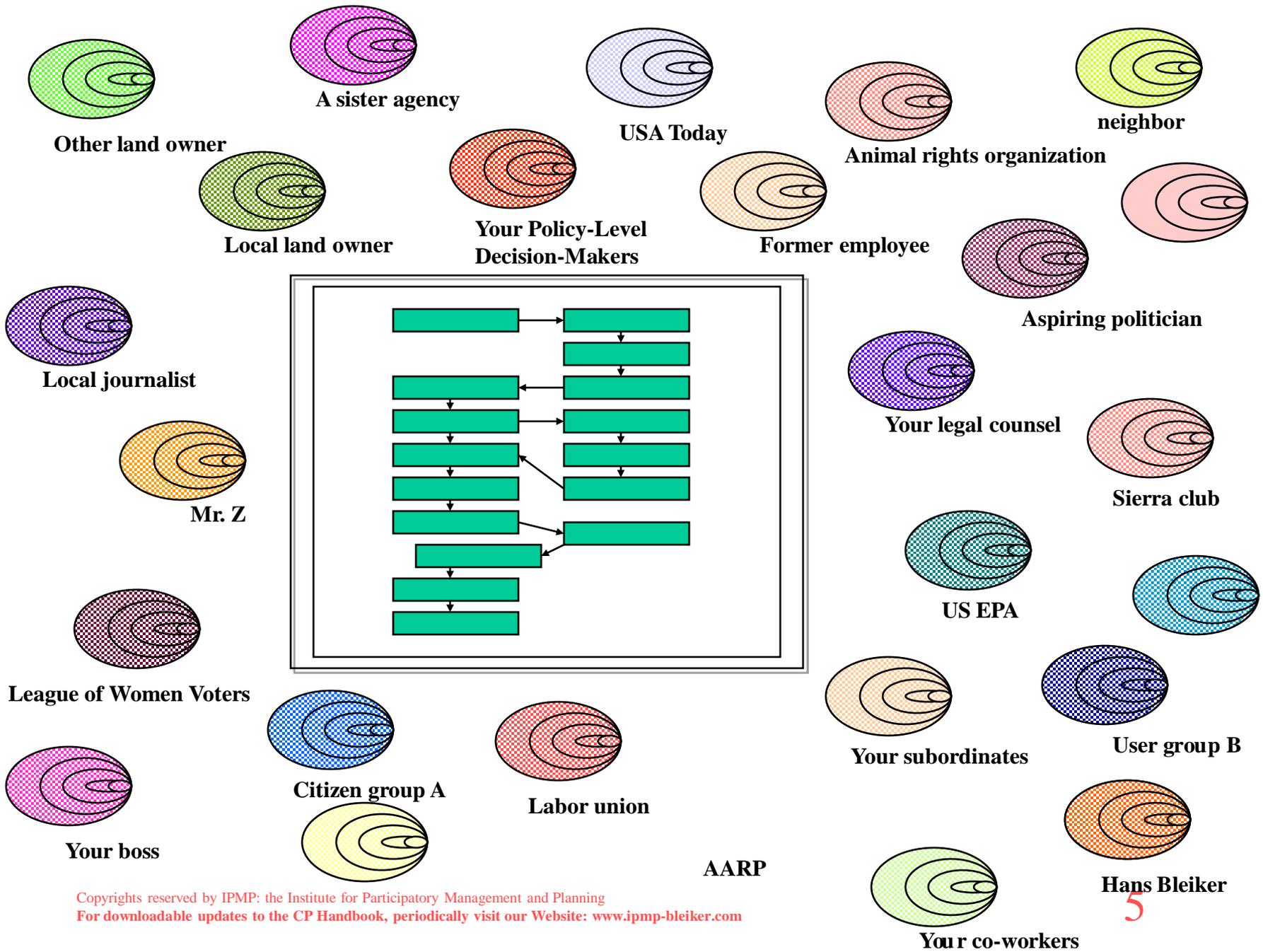
**The 16 Minimum Ingredients
of
Competent Technical Problem-Solving
and Decision-Making**

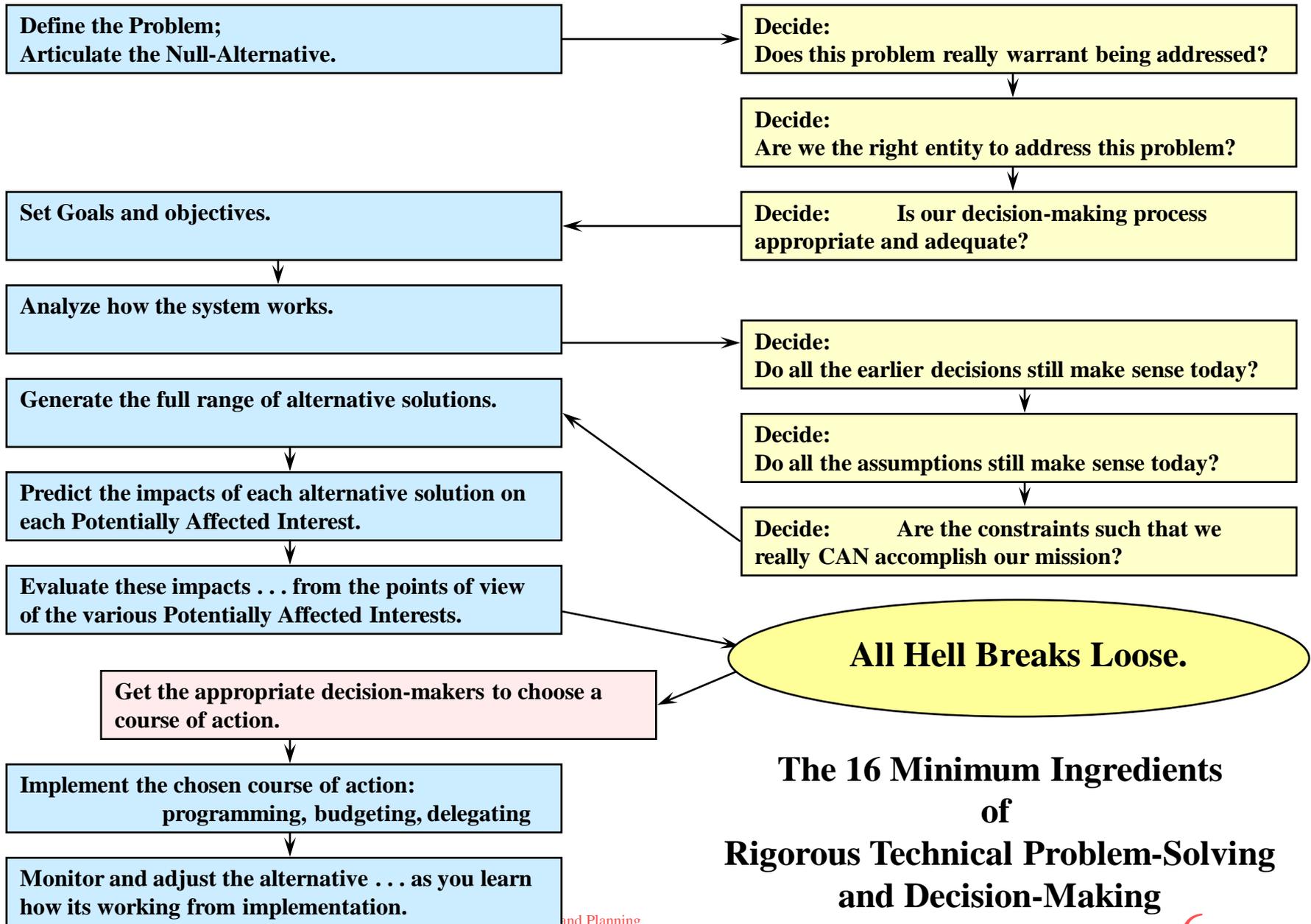
The Implementation Problem

The “Implementation Problem”

Here is why, . . . the trouble is:

- 1. Every solution to a big or complex problem will HURT some interests . . .
 - They will suggest you do something different from what you are contemplating.
- **2. These interests have learned they don't have to take “NO” for an answer from you.**





**The 16 Minimum Ingredients
of
Rigorous Technical Problem-Solving
and Decision-Making**

- *That* is why the *“All Hell Breaks Loose”* step is so predictable.
- It’s going to happen
 - *right* at the 11th hour . . .
 - *right* as you are about to go to the Decision-Makers to recommend that they take action . . .
 - *right* then, . . . at the last minute!

- *The people who do the Hell Raising are likely to constitute just a few PAIs, . . . not really “your Public”, but a small minority of your public.*
- *But, . . . that doesn't matter . . .*
- *In our system of government even tiny special interest groups – even a single individual – can throw a monkey-wrench into the machinery of government . . . It's not that hard to torpedo a governmental proposal.*
- *All an opponent has to do is create decision-making grid-lock.*
- *Opponents who know how to use the system – i.e. our system of Jeffersonian Democracy – may be able to Veto your proposal.*

*Much of our government is painfully ineffective;
Gridlock is far too common . . .*

- Government is not nearly as effective:
 - as it *needs* to be,
 - as it *ought* to be,
 - as it *can* be.

- This, unfortunately, is true:
 - at *all levels* of government,
 - across *all professional disciplines*.

**What's
our real agenda?**

:

**Make Public Agencies
More Effective**

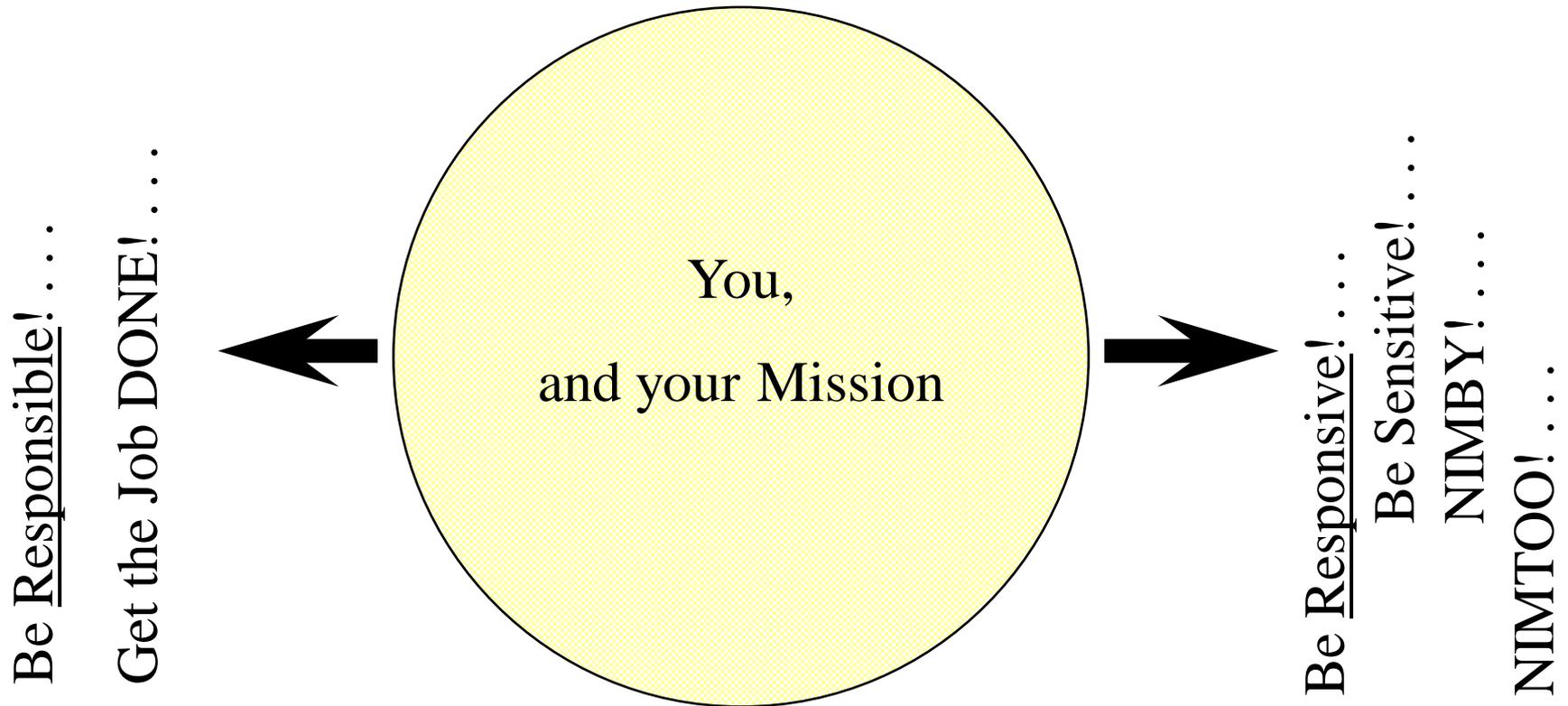
IPMP's Hidden, . . . Real Agenda

- Our *real* agenda:
 - “Making organizations *more effective*,
. . . better at achieving their Missions . . .”
- especially when they have Missions that are *complex, controversial, and difficult* to achieve
- . . . *That* is our *real* agenda . . .

The Origins of SDIC/CPO

**Or: How we stumbled onto this
consent-building strategy**

Can you be both Responsive AND Responsible? . . . or, do you have to Compromise one, . . . the other, . . . or both?



A couple of remarkable *Findings* from our Research

- Two remarkable findings :
 - *Finding #1*
 - *Finding #2*
- These two findings
 - have *guided our 30+ years of research* since then,
 - have *changed our lives*,
 - if you let us, *will change YOUR life . . .*

Finding #1:

- Most experienced, senior public-sector managers *find implementation of their proposals frustratingly difficult:*
- Their proposals tend to get
 - *shelved,*
stopped,
compromised,
vetoed,
torpedoed,
- They are frustrated . . . by their *ineffectiveness*, . . .
- . . . by *the difficulty of getting anything DONE* . . .
- . . . by the **relative ease with which virtually ALMOST ANYONE can throw a monkey - wrench into the problem-solving process, and the solution-implementation process . . .**

Finding #2:

- At the same time, a hand-full of managers have a totally *different* track record . . .
- *They routinely implement virtually all of their proposals . . . without major delays . . .*
- Their proposals are NOT
 - *stopped,*
 - *stalled,*
 - *vetoed, . . .*
- They simply *IMPLEMENT* their proposals!
- **We call them *Implementation Geniuses.***

Implementation Geniuses

Implementation Geniuses

- Although they are not necessarily in leadership positions,
 - they function as leaders . . . They do things differently.
- **They're leaders in CP**
 - . . . i.e. in *how they involve the public.*
- **Their approach to Public Involvement . . .**
 - . . . their Citizen Participation strategy . . .
 - is *fundamentally different* . . . !**

accomplishing complex Missions involves:

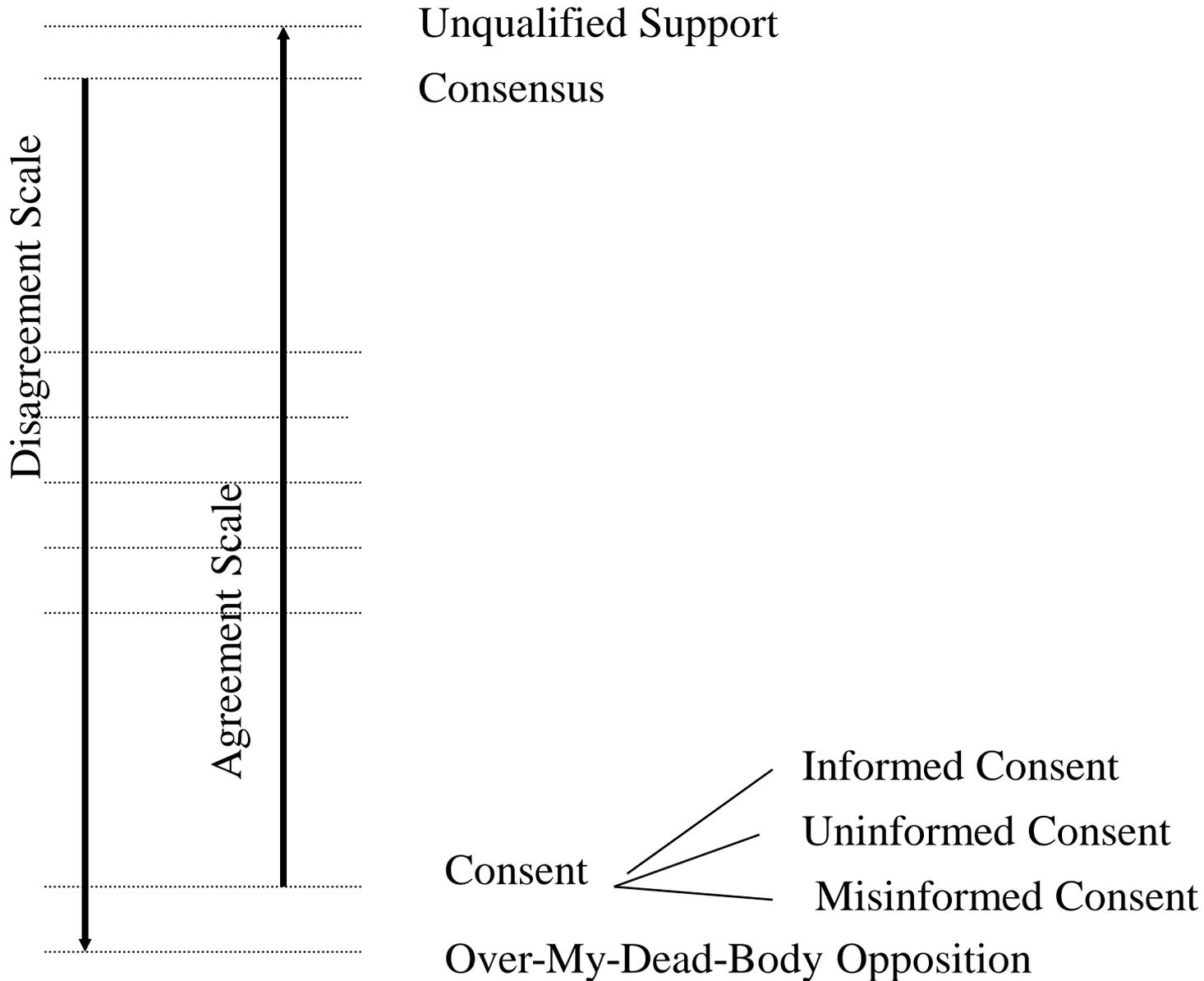
- a reasonably thorough **technical**

Problem-Solving
and Decision-Making
process

- a reasonably effective **public-involvement** /
citizen-participation /
community-relations /
communications /
process

What's different in their approach to CP?

- They are *not* particularly good at developing support for their proposals.
- They work at it *less*.
- They focus their involvement efforts primarily at the *bottom* of the Agreement / Disagreement scale.



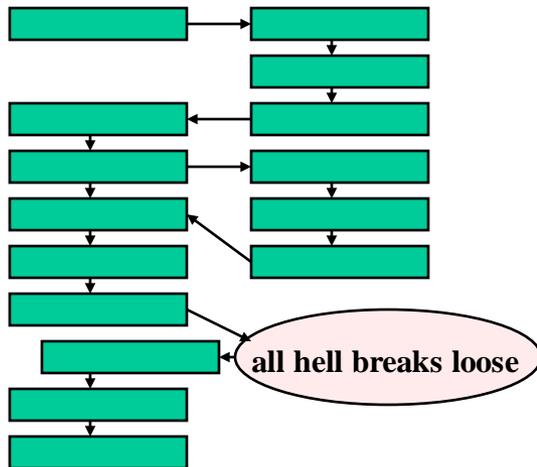
- **They do what, on the surface, appears impossible.**
- **They develop their fiercest opponents’
“Informed Consent”.**
- **But, that’s not all!**

Informed Consent

- *“Informed Consent” is the grudging willingness of opponents to -- grudgingly -- ‘go along’ with a course of action they . . . actually . . . are opposed to.*

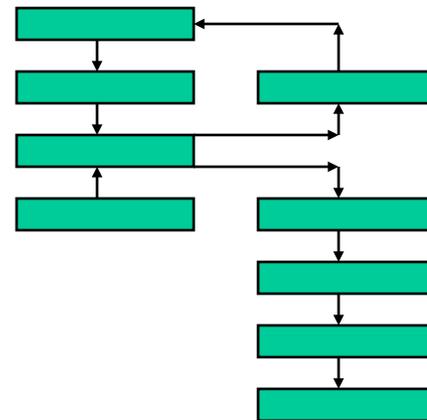
What it takes to accomplish a Public-Sector Mission: two different, parallel kinds of Problem-Solving Efforts!

1. Systematic Process for Analyzing a Problem, its possible Solutions and their Consequences



The Product:
the full range of Alternative Solutions and a good understanding of their impacts, plus Controversy

2. Systematic Process for developing Informed Consent with all the Potentially Affected Interests



The Product:
the full range of Alternative Solutions and the Potentially Affected Interests' Informed Consent

Our 30+ years of R&D:

Systematizing

**the Consent-Building Methods
of**

Implementation Geniuses

What we have done in the last 30+ years

- *We have studied the strategies of Implementation Geniuses . . . we have studied their intuitive methods.*
- *. . . And, we have systematized what they do intuitively, so that anyone -- even someone who is not an Implementation Genius -- can use their methods, . . . their strategies, . . . their tactics.*
- *We have created fairly intense training courses, where we teach to public officials in just a few days what took us 30 years to learn.*

Agencies Perform Good Technical Work

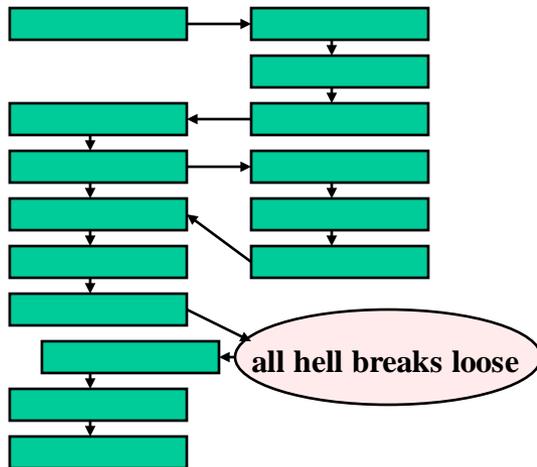
- *Most public agencies are VERY STRONG on the left -- the technical -- side of their work.*
- Not only are strong, . . . *they constantly strive to become better* . . . more rigorous, . . . more scientific, . . . more sophisticated.

Public Agencies' Weak Spot? . . . their *Achilles' Heel*?

- *Rigorous technical plans, . . . proposed solutions to problems, . . .*
 - *that keep running into political and legal brick walls,*
 - **Political Gridlock . . .**
- *And we get . . . more Ineffective Government . . .*
- *The soft spot? . . . the Achilles' Heel?*
- *The right side:*
 - . . . the Communications-side, . . .*
 - . . . the Community Affairs-side,*
 - . . . the Citizen Participation-side.*

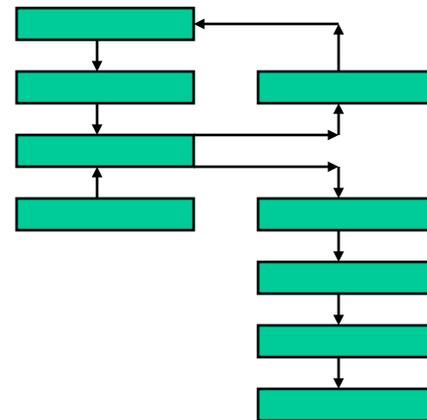
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“SDIC/CPO”

- ***SDIC:***
 - **S**ystematic
 - **D**evelopment of
 - **I**nformed
 - **C**onsent
- ***CPO:***
 - **C**itizen
 - **P**articipation-by-
 - **O**bjectives

The 15 CP Objectives

Because you will need to use **Citizen Participation Techniques** to achieve these objectives, we call them **CP Objectives** . . .

- **5 Responsibility Objectives**
- **5 Responsiveness Objectives**
- **5 Effectiveness Objectives**

The 15 Objectives of “SDIC/CPO”

- *The five Responsibility Objectives*
 - 1. Establish the Legitimacy of your Agency and your Project.
 - 2. Maintain the Legitimacy of your Agency and your Project.
 - 3. Establish the Legitimacy of your Processes and Procedures.
 - 4. Maintain the Legitimacy of your Processes and Procedures.
 - 5. Establish and Maintain the Legitimacy of all relevant Earlier Decisions and Assumptions.

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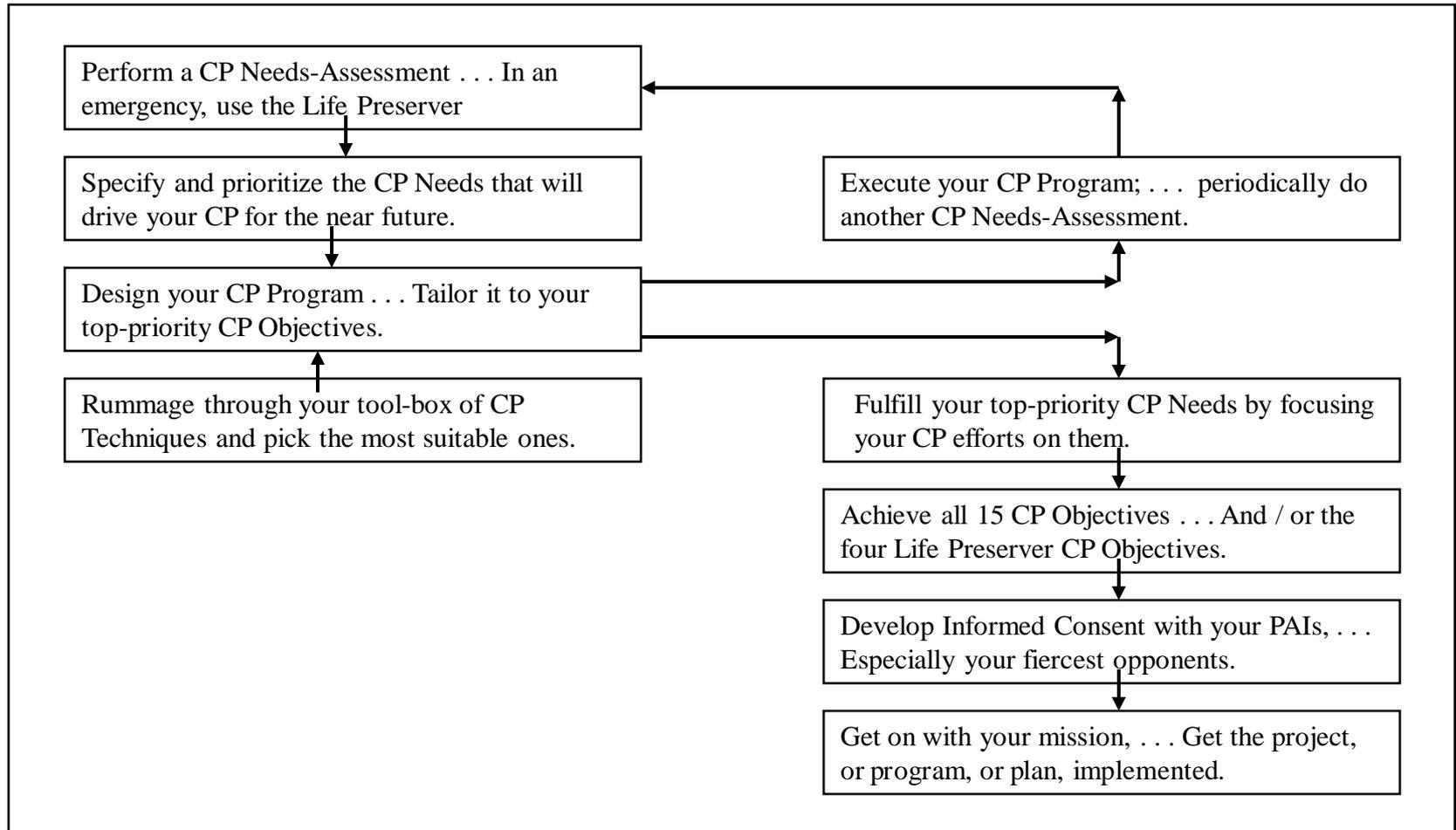
- *The five Responsiveness Objectives*

- 6. Get to Know All the Potentially Affected Interests.
- 7. Get to See the Project and the World through Their Eyes.
- 8. Identify All the Potentially Relevant Problems.
- 9. Generate All the Relevant Solutions and Partial Solutions.
- 10. Articulate and Clarify the Key Issues.

The 15 Objectives of “SDIC/CPO”

- *The five Effectiveness Objectives*
 - 11. Nurture and Protect Your Credibility.
 - 12. Have your Communications Received and Understood.
 - 13. Receive and Understand all the Information that’s Communicated to you.
 - 14. Search for Common Ground among Polarized Interests.
 - 15. Mediate Between Polarized Interests.

2. Communicating, . . . Citizen Participation, Consent-Building



the Bleiker Life Preserver

The Life-Preserver has served many public officials as the *quick-and-dirty substitute* for those situations where using 15 Worksheets (downloadable from our website) would be over-kill. But, that's all it is: a quick-and-dirty substitute . . .

Whatever you say, . . . whatever you write, . . . whatever you do, make sure that your publics *understand* these four points:

- **1.** There *is* a serious Problem . . . or Opportunity . . . *one that just has to be addressed.*
 - **2.** You are *the right entity* to be addressing this problem . . . in fact, given your Mission, it would be *irresponsible* for you not to address this problem.
 - **3.** The way you are going about it, . . . the approach you're using, . . . is *reasonable, . . . sensible, . . . responsible.*
 - **4.** You *are* listening, you *do* care; . . . If, what you're proposing is going to *hurt* someone, *it's not because you don't care; . . . it's not because you're not listening.*
-

Institutionalizing SDIC/CPO Transforms Government

Implementation Geniuses' way of operating *Transforms Government!*

- They develop their opponents' consent, . . .
- They prevent “Decision-Making Gridlock”, . . .
- And, in the process, they earn your public's
 - Trust,
 - Respect,
 - Credibility,
 - . . . even . . . **Admiration**

Examples of Transformed Government

- ***LD McMullen, Water Director for Des Moines, IA***
 - His Consent-Building strategy got him fan-mail, admiration, even fame . . . after he shut off the water to a quarter million people, where they could not flush a toilet for 12 days and could not drink the water for 28 days
- ***David Wilson, former District Ranger, US Forest Service***
 - Got the very people who threatened to kill him -- if he closed a road on Cold Creek Mountain – to do volunteer labor on that mountain, on that closed mountain road, and to praise him for being so responsible and caring . . . even though he made no compromises. . .
- ***Bob Bennett, former City Manager, Round Rock, Texas***
 - Some of his public was so upset about what he, the mayor, and the city council were planning, that they instigated a referendum aimed at abolishing the city charter and write a new one. But, once he did Systematic Consent-Building for those very plans – he got them to change their minds. They told him they would not even run an opponent against the mayor in the next election.