Civility in City Hall

Facilitator:
Kevin Helms, City Manager, Oak Hill, Tennessee

Panelists:
Steve Bryant, ICMA Oregon Senior Advisor, Albany, Oregon
Steve LeDoux, Town Manager, Acton, Massachusetts
Francine Ramaglia, Assistant City Manager, Wellington, Florida
Michael G. Fann, Director of Loss Control, TML Risk Mgmt Pool, Brentwood, Tennessee

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BOSTON
NEW ENGLAND
September 22-25, 2013

Steve Bryant

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- Setting the "Civility Example" for the Community

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- **8 in 10 Americans are frustrated by the tone of political discourse**
  - http://www.civilityinamerica.org/en/
- **How does the public see us behave?**
- **Three video examples—As you watch consider these questions:**
  1. **Does your governing body have a code of conduct?**
  2. **What is the manager's role when things get out of control?**
  3. **What actions could the manager suggest to the governing body in anticipation of a contentious meeting?**
- **Search "Council Code of Conduct" and "Promoting Civility" in the ICMA Knowledge Network for examples**

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Steve LeDoux

Town Manager
Acton, Massachusetts
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- **Civil Interaction with the General Public**

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Today's Challenges

Today's customers:

- Are always in hurry
- Seek instant gratification
- Have higher expectations
- Are short in patience
- Feel entitled due to paying for services
- Expect technology to solve all problems

Municipalities are experiencing:

- Budget cuts
- Staff shortages
- "Piling on" of job responsibilities
- Technology growth bringing higher demands for services
- Population growth bringing new customers
- Increased accountability

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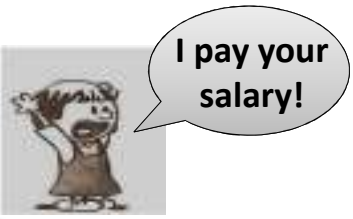
Visitors Code of Conduct

- Most policies deal with internal issues among staff
- Staff need support with situations that go beyond the definition of dealing with a "difficult customer"
  - Empowers staff to know when a line has been crossed and that the Town supports enforcement
- Provides transparency to visitors



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What Brought Us Here

- **Self-Assessment and Employee Training**
  - Met with Employee Assistance Program advisors
    - Staff overwhelmed by growing number of "difficult customers"
    - With departments understaffed, their time is more valuable
  - Conducted customer relationship training
    - When can we say "enough?" Where is the line?
    - Staff needed to be able to point to a policy, removing emotions
- **Drafting the Visitors Code of Conduct Policy**
  - Representatives from Administration, Public Safety and Social Services authored draft policy
  - Department Heads provided additional input

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What Brought Us Here

- **Approval and Acceptance**
  - Town Attorney
  - Board of Selectmen
  - Employees
- **Community outreach**
  - Announced at televised Board of Selectmen meeting
  - Posted in Community Newsletters and on Town Website
  - Prominently displayed in all municipal buildings

"Instead of teaching our team how to be better salespeople, maybe we should teach everyone else how to be better customers."

© Randy Glasbergen
www.glasbergen.com

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Our Policy

- The Town of Acton's employees **strive to provide a positive experience** for those visiting Town facilities, by following the "Professional Standards of Conduct Policy."
- In addition, the Town supports a workplace that is **conducive to personal safety and security** and is **free from intimidation, threats or violent acts.**

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Our Policy

- The Town **does not tolerate workplace violence** including the threat of violence by anyone who conducts business with the Town.
- Complying with this code of conduct is **required by all people doing business with Town employees.**
- Violators who do not comply with this policy **may be asked to leave the premises.**

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Expected Conduct

- Avoid causing **disturbances or disruptions**
- Show **respect** for others, **building facilities** and **personal property** of others
- Use **common courtesy** when interacting with others
- Do not engage in any **lewd or offensive behavior**
- Any form of **violence** is prohibited
- **Smoking, drinking alcohol** or **appearing to be under the influence** of any illegal substance is prohibited

Repeated violations may result in permanent suspension of facility privileges

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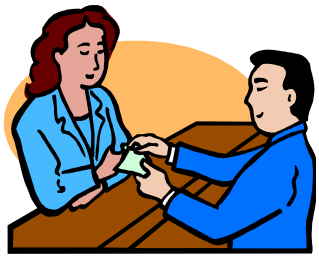
Benefits for All

- **Benefits for Visitors**
  - Promotes fair and consistent utilization of staff and resources
  - Reduces cost to the Town and taxpayers
  - Alleviates bystander discomfort



- **Benefits for Staff**
  - Improves employee morale and instills confidence
  - Increases productivity and decreases stress
  - Addresses safety concerns
  - Provides an expectation of civil behavior
  - Breaks the "enabling" cycle and reduces susceptibility to bullying

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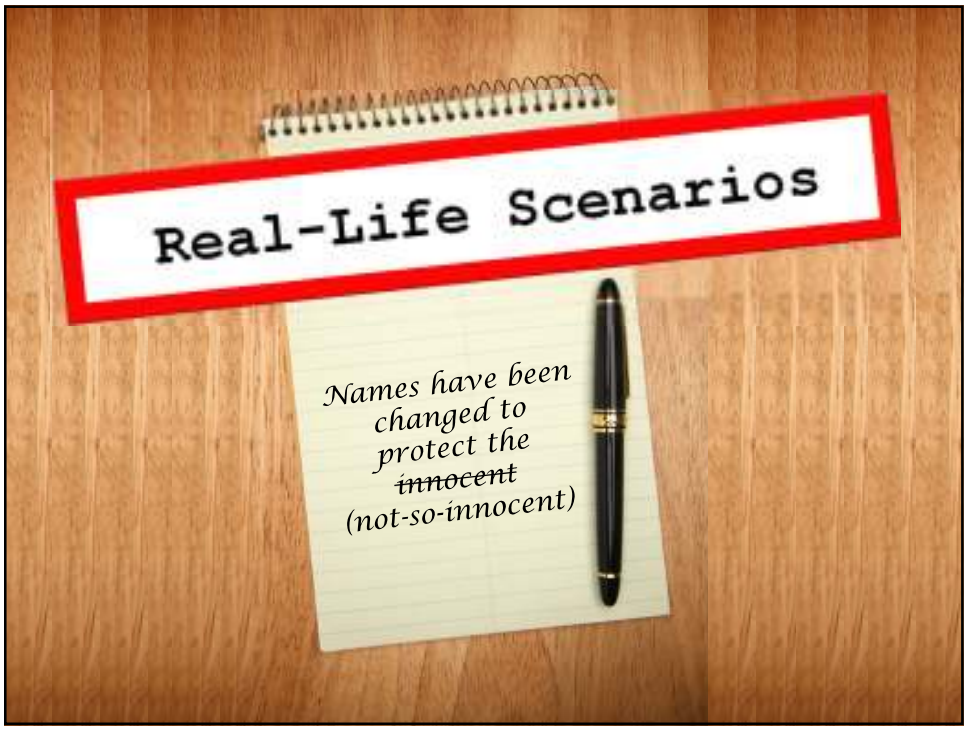

Cost Implications
10 customers wasted 5 hours of staff time each week
@$35 /hr
Total Cost: $1750
1 customer wasted 5 hours of staff time
Total Cost: $175
This continues each week for a year
Total Cost: $91,000

Mitigating the madness?
Priceless.

Code Of Conduct Allows For:

- A safe work environment
  - An expectation of civil behavior
  - Professional interaction between staff and customers
- A welcoming Town Hall experience
  - Equal and fair treatment of all customers
  - Efficient time management for staff
- Upper Management support

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Questions/Comments?

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Francine L. Ramaglia

Assistant City Manager
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68%

Political incivility deters qualified people from working in public service

Civility in America 2013

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69%

Government

63%

Public & Media

Civility in America 2013

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30%

Community

22%

Local Papers

Civility in America 2013

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55%

General tone of
incivility in the workplace

Civility in America 2013

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96%

Experienced

48%

Experience Weekly

10%

Witness Daily

94%

Get Even

Pearson & Porath

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78%
↓ Commitment

47%
↓ TimeSpent

66%
↓ Performance

38%
↓ Quality

Pearson & Porath

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80%

Lose time **worrying** about the situation

Pearson & Porath

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25%

Admit to taking frustration out on customer

Pearson & Porath

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40%

Workers leaving jobs as a result of being treated rudely

Boston Globe

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83-84%

Civil work environment very important and increases productivity

Baltimore Workplace Study

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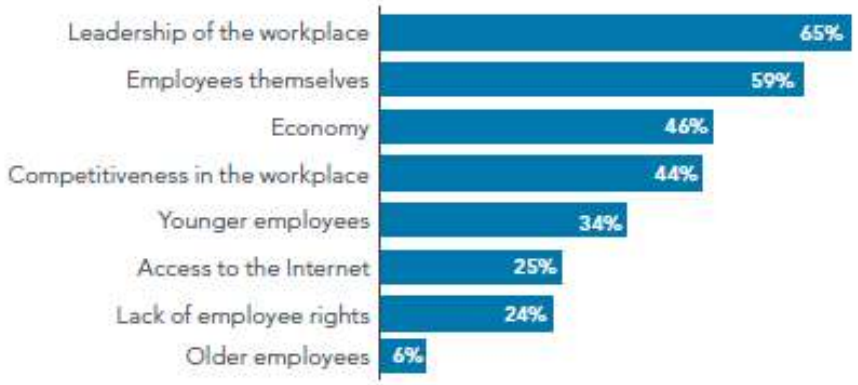
Who/What Is To Blame For Workplace Incivility?
(among those who report the workplace is becoming more uncivil)



Civility in America 2011

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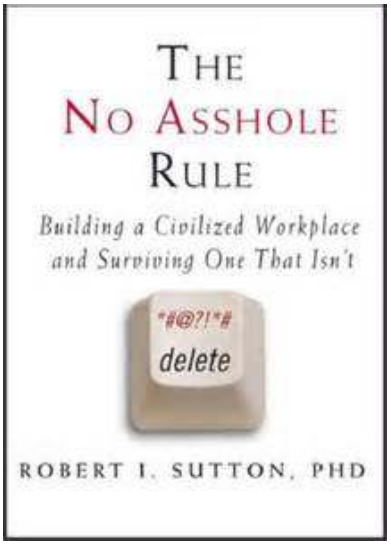

Are you a Certified ARSE?

Find out with an easy online 24 question self assessment:

http://electricpulp.com/guykawasaki/arse/

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Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.

-Albert Schweitzer

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Employee engagement
is about culture.
Management
Employees
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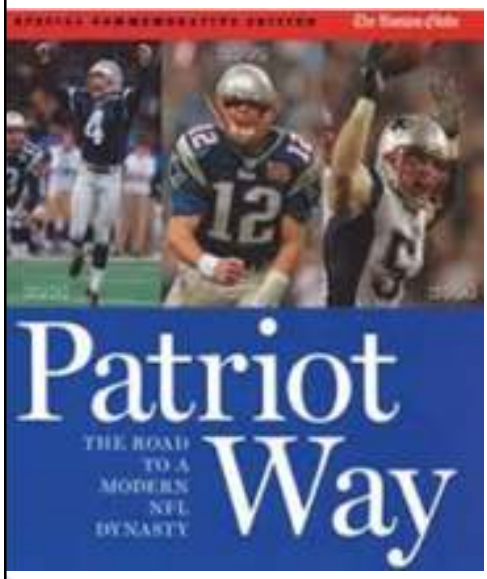
Patriot
Way
THE ROAD
TO A
MODERN
NFL
DYNASTY

What Is The Patriot Way?

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WELLINGTON

Great Neighborhood
Great School
Great Parks

A Great Hometown

Let Us Show You!

4 Questions Test For All Projects & Programs

- **Does it foster a family environment?**
- **Does it promote safe neighborhoods?**
- **Does it enhance the value of our community?**
- **Is it the right thing to do?**

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VALUES
Excellence and Innovation
Integrity and Professionalism
Community and Accountability
CORE COMPETENCIES
Customer Service
Communication
Teamwork
Leadership and Development

Get Fit...Get Well

Bringing It All Together

Neighborhood Renaissance & Engagement

Protecting our Investment
Respecting the Environment
Economic Development
Responsive Government

A Great Hometown

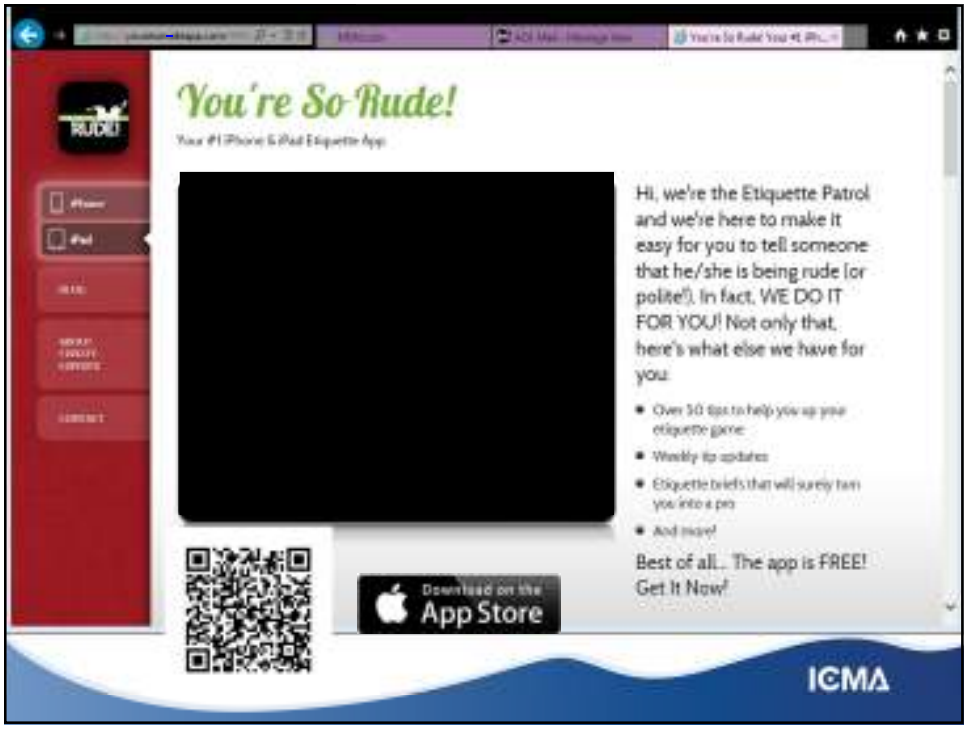
MORE

CORE

Providing Services the Community

Wants, Needs and are willing to Pay for

WELLINGTON



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- **Civility on a Personal Level**
- **Is It Me, or Is It You?**

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Why should you care about civility on an interpersonal level?

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Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.

-- Plato

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Policy On Workplace Civility

In summation:

- **Be respectful in what you say *(verbal)***
- **Be respectful in what you show *(visual)***
- **Be respectful in what you do *(physical)***

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What is Civility??

- **Definition**
  1. A polite act or expression
  2. Formal or perfunctory politeness
  3. The act of showing regard for others
  4. A courteous act or acts that contribute to smoothness & ease in dealings, and social relationships
- **How you treat people**…
- ***Life-enhancer*** or ***Well-poisoner***?

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US News: Civility Survey

- **89% of people interviewed said that it was a serious problem in today's society.**
- **90% of these same people said they were not personally rude.**

- 50% say it is extremely serious.
- 78% said civility has deteriorated considerably over the past ten years.
- 90% of those polled believe it contributes to the increasing violence in this country.
- 85% believe it contributes to eroding crucial values such as respecting others.

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Civility between you and me…

- <u>Is it you, or is it me</u>?

"Johari Window"

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	✓ Arena ✓	✖ Blind Spot ✓
Not known to others	✓ Facade ✖	✖ Unknown ✖

Joseph Luft & Harry Ingham, 1955

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The Incivility Continuum

Negative Behavior
- *Rude comments*
- *Insensitive actions*
- *Unintentional slights*
- *Complaining*
- *Gossip/rumors*
- *Cultural bias*
- *Crude jokes*
- *Profanity*

Verbal Aggression
- *Yelling / loud voice*
- *Belittling comments*
- *Intimidation / threats*
- *Discriminatory comments*
- *Cursing at someone*
- *Humiliation*

Physical/Sexual Aggression
- *Assault / Battery*
- *Throwing objects*
- *Violent outbursts (e.g. hitting the wall)*
- *Inappropriate touching*
- *Harassment*

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Civility in City Hall

TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Results
  - Morale..... ⇩
  - Productivity..... ⇩
  - Public image..... ⇩
  - Workplace Injuries..... ⇧
  - Employment Liability claims..... ⇧
  - Exposure to Workplace Violence..... ⇧

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Clearing the A – I – R

Appreciate
Explicitly tell others you want to hear their point of view…
"I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this problem with you"

Inquire
The other person has the floor – be an active listener…
"Let me make sure I understand your position…"

Respond
Now you have the floor…
"Now that I have a sense of your point of view,
let me try to explain where I'm coming from…"

from Workplace Wars

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Final Thoughts

- **Don't wait for someone to be nice to you, and avoid "keeping score"**
- **Don't be afraid to put yourself in "Time Out" so you can 'cool off' before expressing yourself**
- **Consider letting some things slide, especially slights that you know to be unintentional**
- **THE biggest risk: "Culture of Indifference"**

You must *be* the change
you want to see in the world.
~ Mahatma Gandhi

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At age 14, George Washington compiled a list of "*110 Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour*"…

<u>Rule #110</u> –
Labour to keep alive in your breast that little celestial fire called "conscience."

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Questions/Comments?

Additional Information…

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