



# PROMOTING CIVILITY WITH COUNCIL & YOUR COMMUNITY

Lessons from the Road

# Current State



[Detroit City Council Screaming Match](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrFvAiQDuEo)

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# Current State

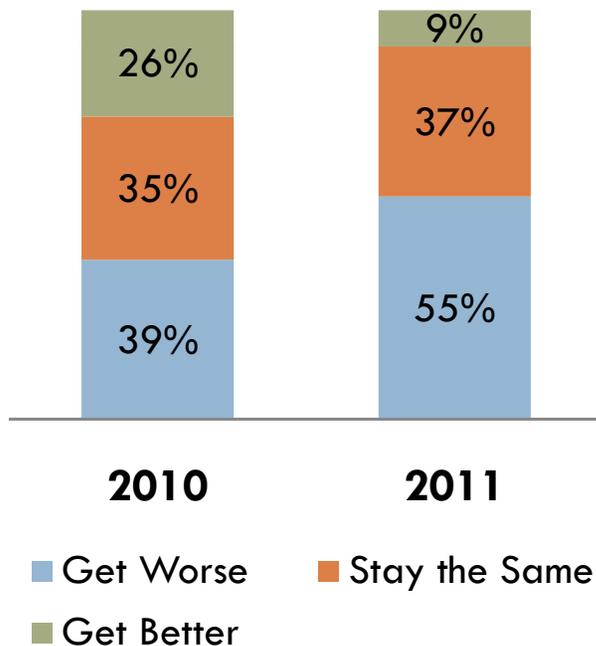


[Scranton is like Berlin Under Hitler](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3_9nlbHZk4)

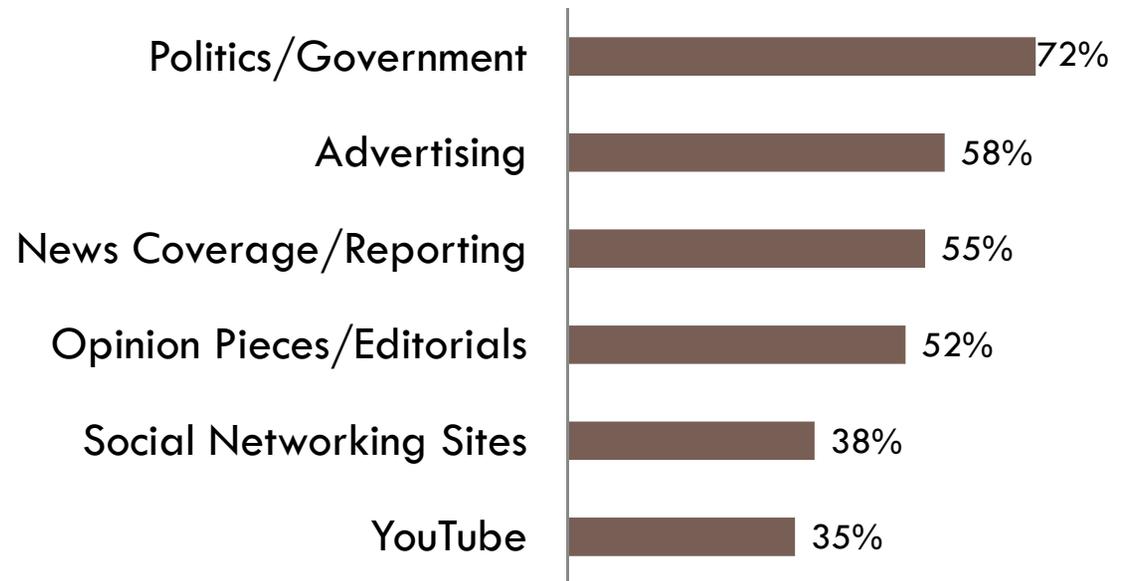
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3\\_9nlbHZk4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3_9nlbHZk4)

# Current State

During the Next Few Years, Civility in America Will..



Tuning Out Of...Because of Incivility



*Civility in America 2011*, Weber Shandwick & Powell Tate, in partnership with KRC Research

# Factors Contributing to Current State



- ❑ Lack of respect and decorum
- ❑ Lack of trust and empathy
- ❑ Trickle down effect of “anti-government”
- ❑ “Gotcha” or “Sound Bite” journalism
- ❑ Faceless bloggers
- ❑ Socio-demographic variables (income levels, age, etc.)
- ❑ Elected officials – asset or liability?

# The Ten Commandments of Public Civility

1. Thou shalt not rudely interrupt a colleague midsentence; nor “speak over” a colleague while she/he is speaking.

*Example – You can watch and learn from Meet the Press; but cancel any rerun of Crossfire*

2. Thou shalt not assume that shrillness of tone is a substitute for substantive dialogue.

*Example – See example #1 above*

3. Thou shalt treat the members of the public with the same courtesy as you would if they were members of your body – and perhaps more importantly, require that they treat you and your colleagues the same way.

4. Thou shalt not resort to “zingers” designated to embarrass your target.

*It's Time To Clean Up Our Act,*  
**John C. Gillespie, South Dakota Municipalities**

# The Ten Commandments of Public Civility

5. Thou shalt, where possible, explore areas of common ground where legitimate disagreements exist, in an effort to move forward on matters of public importance.
6. Thou shalt not allow legitimate critique of policy and practice to become a personal attack aimed at the person who devised the policy or implements the practice.
7. Thou shalt always recognize that your colleagues were also elected, just as you were, and deserve the same level of respect for having run and won.

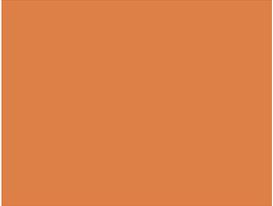
*Example – Remember that the members of the public who elected the colleague that you don't like may be the same folks who send you packing the next time around.*

# The Ten Commandments of Public Civility

8. Thou shalt not ridicule or belittle a colleague, or a member of the public, simply because he or she disagrees with you on an issue.

*Example – Believing that the words “under God” belong in the Pledge of Allegiance doesn’t make someone a “theocratic moron.” Conversely, someone who articulates a position urging that the words “under God” should be excluded from the Pledge of Allegiance, doesn’t make that person a “heathen.”*

9. Thou shalt not pretend something is much more important than it really is, simply to score points with an audience.
10. Thou shalt always remember that it is reasonable to agree to disagree, and that reasonable people can indeed disagree reasonably.

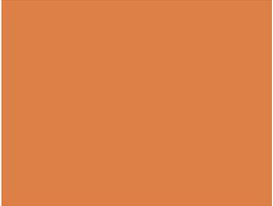


## Lessons from the Road

A typical council meeting in my  
city/county is like...

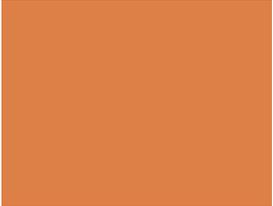
## Lessons from the Road

Does your city or county council have a code of conduct? If so, is it followed? Who is the “caretaker?”



## Lessons from the Road

When the mayor or chairperson is  
part of the problem...



## Lessons from the Road

Role of the manager/administrator  
in promoting civility...



## Lessons from the Road

Other tips for infusing civil  
behavior on council and with your  
community

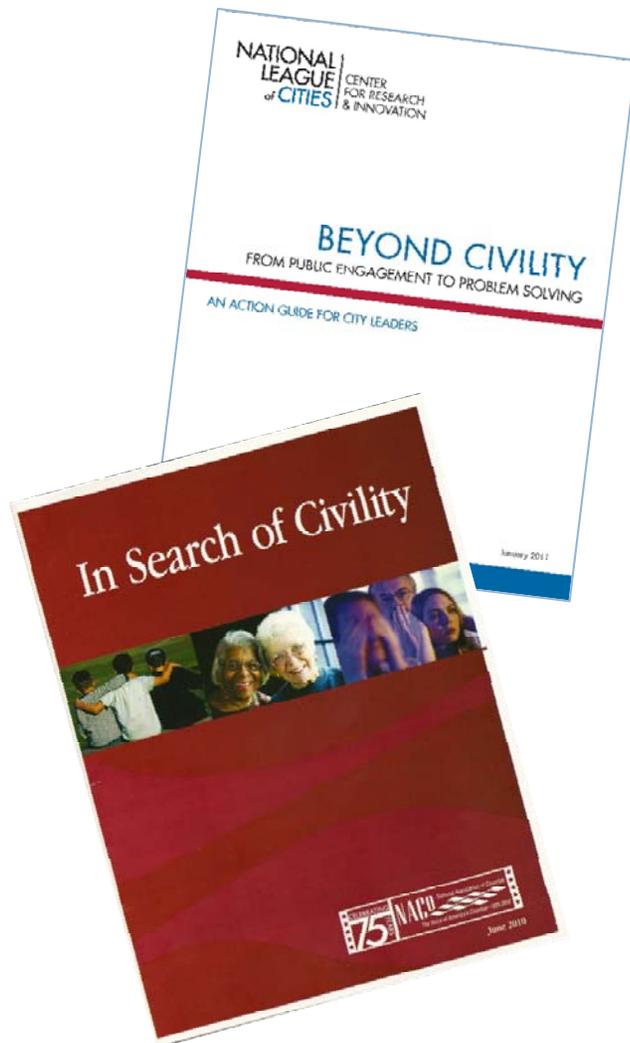
# Beyond Council Meetings & Public Hearings



- Create opportunities for informed engagement
- Support a culture of community involvement

*Beyond Civility: From Public Engagement to Problem Solving, National League of Cities*

# Resources



- [Promoting Civility at Public Meetings: Concepts](#), International City/County Management Association
- [Promoting Civility at Public Meetings: Practice](#), International City/County Management Association
- [Beyond Civility: From Public Engagement to Problem Solving](#), National League of Cities
- [Civility in America 2011 Report](#), Weber Shandwick & Powell Tate, in partnership with KRC Research
- [In Search of Civility](#), National Association of Counties, <http://www.naco.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- [The Institute for Civility in Government](#)
- [The National Civility Center](#)
- [The Institute for Public Service and Policy Research](#), [University of South Carolina](#)