BUILDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNICATION:

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS AND FAILURE

USING A NARRATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

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This study uses narrative analysis to investigate public communication efforts of community development groups to provide a richer understanding of the indicators of group success or failure in this context. The subjects are participants of the Indiana HomeTown Competitiveness program, an initiative that seeks to develop local economic capacity to move rural communities beyond outdated economic models and generate more innovative, sustainable community development. Indiana HomeTown Competitiveness emphasizes four points: entrepreneurship, leadership, youth engagement, and local wealth or philanthropic giving. The impetus for this study is the pilot program's need for a better understanding of the manner in which participating groups might generate engagement from external community members.

To better understand the groups' success or failure regarding public communication efforts, instances of seven pre-determined themes derived from narratives provided by group members are investigated. The themes, identified by existing research, include group relationships, group structure, group process, member attributes, external forces, group communication, and member emotions. This study uses a blend of quantitative and qualitative analysis to give broad perspective to successful identification of effective tactics which groups may use to engage community members in economic initiatives by means of public communication.

Though the study is exploratory in nature, the findings indicate that group communication, relationships, and group structure are likely predictors of a group's success or failure. The findings of this study also offer a reflection of actions that were successful and also actions that were not successful to program participants, and documents results for future program participants to use. The results also expand upon the available research regarding community development using communication theory. Using a narrative approach also identifies directions of further study to address the multiple discourses created by groups that give insight into community and group communication.

Catherine A. Dobris, Ph.D., Chair

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Communities in the United States currently face a myriad of complex societal and

economic issues that affect the well-being and quality of life of local residents. As the

nation's society and culture changed rapidly and dramatically throughout the second half

of the 20th century and continues to evolve, many economic issues were created that are

uniquely rural. Harvard University's Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness identify

four significant barriers to economic competitiveness currently facing rural communities

(Porter et al., 2004):

- Current policies draw on limited government resources at a time of budget deficits and cuts in spending. With many other competing demands on public sector funds, policies that fail to generate results are getting increasingly hard to defend.

- Rural counties account for 80% of land area, and 20% of U.S. population. Weak performance in rural regions diminishes national productivity and national prosperity, and fails to effectively utilize the nation's resources. As the growth of the U.S. workforce slows, making all parts of the economy productive is an important priority.

- Third, the inability of rural areas to achieve their potential leads to an inefficient spatial distribution of economic activity in the United States. Activities that could be performed more efficiently in rural areas either migrate offshore or add to the congestion of urban centers.

- Fourth, weak rural performance creates demands for interventions that threaten to erode the incentives for productive economic activity. The lack of competitiveness of rural economies has been a prominent cause of agricultural subsidies as well as import barriers that hurt the U.S. position in the international trading system without addressing the underlying challenges rural regions face (p. 3).

Dr. Charles Fluharty (2010), President and CEO of the Rural Policy Research Institute,

identifies several immediate factors affecting the economic success of rural communities,

including:

- The current national recession, and the lagging economic recovery which will only slowly come to central city and rural areas;

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funds are gone next year (2011);

- State and local governments are already operating under historic budget deficits;

- Human services needs are expanding exponentially.

Each of these issues poses a tremendous challenge to rural communities in the United States. To compound the difficult task of creating economic sustainability, many rural areas are working to reduce their economy's dependence on the manufacturing sector, which no longer requires the workforce it did in the past. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (1995):

> Manufacturing is a major provider of both rural jobs and income, providing jobs for nearly 17 percent of the rural workforce and employing more people than farming, agricultural services, forestry, fishing, and mining combined. Manufacturing also provides roughly a quarter of all rural earnings. However, like farming, the share of manufacturing jobs in rural areas has declined. From 1969 to 1992, that share dropped from 20.4 percent to 16.9 percent of rural employment (p. 5).

Just as agriculture now requires a fraction of the workforce to produce more products, manufacturing is now playing a less significant role in the make up of the rural economy, and other sectors of the workforce must grow to sustain rural communities.

Because of current economic dynamics, many cities and towns across the nation are seeking new solutions to traditional community and economic development issues in order to create more sustainable communities. One such program, developed in Indiana, is called HomeTown Competitiveness. HomeTown Competitiveness is a framework for community economic development that was adapted from a similar program that achieved success in Nebraska. Indiana's pilot program was launched in 2008 and is

administered through a collaborative partnership by the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Ball State University's Building Better Communities, Indiana Association for Community and Economic Development, University of Southern Indiana, Indiana Grantmaker's Alliance, and the Indiana Rural Development Council. HomeTown Competitiveness, or Indiana-HTC, is based on four pillars that support economic viability in rural communities: entrepreneurship, leadership, youth engagement, and local wealth/philanthropic giving (Office of Community and Rural Affairs, 2011). Indiana-HTC also emphasizes community and economic development as a comprehensive activity. Dr. Fluharty identifies comprehensive community development practices such as working in partnership and leveraging resources as a key piece of economic success, of which both activities are likely to require group communication. He also comments that not enough emphasis is currently placed on creating mutual benefit for the surrounding region with the statement "comity within our public discourse, and the tempering center of our body politic, both continue to erode." (Fluhardy, 2010). Indiana-HTC's pillars support Dr. Fluharty's notion that successful economic development has synergistic qualities. Understanding community development in rural areas as well as the nature of the Indiana-HTC program solidifies the need to develop a better understanding of what communication practices community groups use to engage surrounding stakeholders.

Effective communication is inherently linked to community development for several reasons. Since communities, like those participating in Indiana-HTC, function as an organization composed of smaller groups, community development can be examined

using organizational and group communication theory. Within any community, both formal and informal groups exist and possess varying degrees of power and influence. Groups may be elected, professional, civic, or social. Groups determine the vehicle by which community information is distributed and how frequently information is communicated. Because of this communication, groups contribute to the fabric of a community through storytelling. Rhetorical communication theory can also be used to study the stories, or narratives, that are created by community groups as cultural artifacts. A coffee shop or gas station in a rural town may serve as an informal information conduit. School events are also a likely place to find out about community happenings. Often functioning without many formal media outlets, social media is now a predominant force in many rural communities, as well. Since a physical place and face-to-face interaction are no longer required in order to enact the rituals of storytelling, stories now have a broader reach of audience. Given these unique opportunities and constraints, all Indiana-HTC programs use multiple forms of communication in their programs and activities. This study will investigate how communication shapes the results of the groups' activities.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Narratives, or stories, play an important role in every community, regardless of culture or historical period. Even though stories seem to be a simple, even childlike concept, narrative research is a broad, multidisciplinary area of study that has been widely applied throughout the social sciences. Use of narrative research can be found throughout various scholarly works from many disciplines of study, e.g. Polkinghorne (1988) who explored narrative's influence on human behavior from a psychological perspective. Narrative study also transcends different areas of communication research. Narrative work is adaptable to many areas of study and is used in quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical communication research.

Since the body of narrative research is very broad, this literature review will consider three specific areas of narrative research: Fisher's narrative paradigm, organizational identity and culture, and group buy-in and collaboration. These three areas of narrative study provide the theoretical basis for this project. Several foundational academic articles regarding narrative and organizational communication and also more recent scholarly articles regarding those topics, give a thorough background of these areas of communication study. Background concerning the field of community development, literature regarding rural issues in community development, and other relevant research that has been conducted regarding communication in community development is also included in this literature review.

Fisher's Narrative Paradigm

The first area of narrative research that provides a background for this study is the narrative rhetorical paradigm. The narrative paradigm of communication features the

message of a rhetorical artifact. Studying narratives through a critical lens helps scholars

understand how the world is constructed, using stories as a vehicle. It is a popular and

widely used area of research in the body of scholarly communication work. Fisher

(1984) explains that through narratives, we create and understand our world through

stories and the stories create shared meaning because "the idea of human beings as

storytellers indicates the generic form of all symbol composition; it holds that symbols

are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to human

experience and to induce others to dwell in them to establish ways of living in common,

in communities in which there is sanction for the story which constitutes one's life" (p.

6). Fisher's quotation provides a rich context of understanding narratives which can be

widely applied to both small and large group interaction. Moreover, as Foss explains

(2004):

> Narratives organize the stimuli of our experience so that we can make
> sense of the people, places, events, and actions of our lives. They allow us
> to interpret reality because they help us decide what a particular
> experience is about and how the various elements of our experience are
> connected (p. 333).

Foss outlines four characteristics that distinguish narratives from other forms of rhetoric.

A narrative must be comprised of at least two events, the events are organized by time

order, the narrative must include some kind of causal or contributing relationship among

events, and the narrative must be about a unified subject. Because of the nature of

community development work, the narrative paradigm is a natural fit for communication

research in the field. Foss suggests (2004):

> Narratives involve audiences in ways that other forms of discourse do not
> because they are intersubjectively *sharable*. The narrated world is a
> shared world because it is a joint achievement by the storyteller and the
> audience. To experience the narrated world, both the narrator and the

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audience must recognize the discursive form of the story and understand the story's meaning (p. 309).

Community development groups seek to "share their story" to change negative conditions through a variety of media including news, print, web, face to face interaction, or other sources. Groups use stories to create a shared meaning and understanding of the issues affecting their local community and persuade others to contribute to their work. Fisher (1984) also gives insight into the manner in which narratives may be used to create tangible results. He offers the following explanation of how a message might be evaluated:

> Where the narrative paradigm goes beyond the theories [attribution theory, balance theory, constructivism, social convergence theory, reinforcement theory, social exchange theory, and symbolic interactionism] is providing a "logic" for assessing stories, for determining whether or not one *should* adhere to the stories one is encouraged to endorse or accept (p. 348).

Fisher (1984) uses the narrative rhetorical paradigm to give perspective to the general familiarity that most individuals have with narratives as a part of human nature and its role in creating meaning in communities and the way in which stories connect with public audiences, and he also emphasizes the value of narratives as a decision making tool.

Compared to other types of rhetorical analysis, the narrative paradigm has disadvantages or challenges to consider when applying a particular method to an artifact; however, is a good choice for studying community development groups. Rowland identifies potential pitfalls to putting the narrative perspective into practice (as cited in Kuyper, 2004). He warns the reader that the method may not be effective if it meets the criteria of a narrative set forth by Foss but is not clearly a "story" to the audience. Rowland also suggests that human interpretation of stories can be a pitfall of the narrative perspective. Most individuals will have some bias or preference to certain types of

stories and evaluate stories differently based on their personal understanding. Rowland (2004) elaborates that stories that are works of fantasy, science fiction, or allegory would be more difficult because the critic must discover the underlying narrative pattern and translate the message of the story into the category of more a realistic nature. Given these constraints, narrative is an appropriate choice for a community development group since their narratives are derived from real-world experiences.

Organizational Identity and Culture

The second area of narrative research that provides background for this study focuses on organizational identity and culture. Fisher (1984) also explores the concept of identification in the narrative paradigm. This is illustrated by the statement "the concept of identification [which can] account for how people come to adopt stories" (p. 19). By creating shared meaning through narratives, stories may foster identification between the storyteller and the audience. Among Cheney's (1983, 1984) extensive works on organizational communication, he applies Kenneth Burke's theory of identification to organizations. Cheney explains how organizations frequently use persuasion both internally within the organization and externally to the public through a variety of means including printed material, news media, advertisements, and other types of communication (Cheney, 1984). In this article, he outlines six strategies for creating identification with an organization: the common ground technique, recognition of individual contributions, espousal of shared values, advocacy of benefits and activities, praise by outsiders, and "testimonials" by employees, customers, or others in contact with the organization (Cheney, 1983). Cheney identifies testimonials, or narratives, as one of the key ways organizations can create shared meaning using identification.

The relationship between identification and narrative is considered by Ashforth (2001) who examines how role identity is created through narratives by posing three questions: (1) How do narratives inform people about their organizational identity? (2) How do stories fold into an organizational identity? (3) How do stories provide a springboard for other narratives? Ashforth suggests organizations can foster identification through three rhetorical strategies, originally identified by Cheney (1983). The strategies include using the common ground technique, identification by antithesis, and the transcendent "we". Ashforth also suggests how personal "roles" create narratives. The roles have boundaries; relative to an organization, these might be "employee" or "customer". Roles played by different individuals create narratives given their shared understanding of the organization, shaped by rhetoric from the organization and their peers. Consideration of roles in community development groups, or of group members playing the role of a rural citizen, may give important context to this project and indicate why narratives are created by the group.

Narratives can create meaning in organizations and communities, but different rhetorical artifacts may be internalized differently by individual members of the community. Meyerson and Martin (1987) give three perspectives of understanding shared meaning in organizations. An *integrated perspective* examines beliefs and values that are common to all organizational members, a view typical of early research. A *differentiated perspective* considers beliefs and values of the subcultures that exist and which may contrast or conflict with those of other subcultures or with the general organizational culture. A *fragmented perspective* considers organizational members' views to be ever changing with few shared understandings. Researchers gain a more

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complete understanding of an organization's culture by combining all three perspectives to produce insights that are inaccessible from any one particular perspective. The three perspectives can easily be applied to shared meaning created by narratives and storytelling in organizations or communities.

The relationship between storytelling and organizations is also the key message of Kelly and Zak (1999). Kelly and Zak illustrate the versatility of the narrative paradigm in organizations with the statement "narrative…operates at a high level of rhetorical power in every context because stories are the way we make sense of our lives" (1999, p. 297). Kelly and Zak's article examines the appropriateness and effectiveness of narrative from a professional standpoint. They explain the prevalence of narratives in professional and organizational communication in sense-making activities, like selling and sales, change management, trust building, and negation of shared meaning or shared values. Sense-making activities are a valuable means for community development groups to use the narrative paradigm to bring clarity to their organizational development structure and goals. Kelly and Zak (1999) also explain that narrative is an effective choice for diverse audiences and is widely adaptable to many communication goals. Narrative's adaptability is valuable to community development groups, which likely face a diverse audience, and can also help groups meet a variety of different organizational goals, as well as serve as a sense-making tool which is relevant to public audiences considering an external group's message.

Narratives also help individuals create and better understand group culture. Kramer and Berman (2001) conducted a study of university students to better understand how students use stories to understand and internalize university culture and their role as

part of the university as an organization. In the study, the authors collected narratives and used grounded theory to develop categories of analysis after the data was collected. For each research question, the authors identified categories and subcategories. For example, in response to the authors' first research question which inquires about the students' understanding of unified university culture, Kramer and Berman (2001) identify "maintaining academic heritage" (p. 300) as a category and "connection between the university and town, campus buildings and monuments, famous people associated with the university, and the university's longstanding organizations and academic traditions" as subcategories (p. 300). One of the findings of Kramer and Berman's study that could be particularly relevant to community development groups is their suggestion that a "fragmented perspective can provide important information about how organizational members make sense of their culture" (p. 309). The authors suggest, "in this way, a fragmented perspective of stories assists in understanding how organizational members view their organization's culture as inconsistent and changing by emphasizing that ambiguity is part of an organization's culture" (p. 309). Since the nature of community development groups is not rigid or structured, this statement demonstrates that community development groups may not need to be as structured as other groups to be successful.

Group Effectiveness and Collaboration

The third area of narrative research that provides background for this study includes narrative studies regarding group effectiveness and collaboration. Narratives and storytelling often serve as powerful tools of persuasion. Hirokawa et al. (2000) address a very basic question: why are some groups successful and others not? Similar to

Kramer and Berman (2001), undergraduate students and their understanding of group membership are the subjects of this study. In the narratives collected from the students, the authors identified the most occurring themes contributing to group success as relationships, emotions, and member attributions, and the most occurring themes contributing to group failure as member attributions, group process, and group structure (p. 579). These themes were not pre-determined by the study's framework, but rather were emergent themes identified by grouping stories into conceptual groups using the premise of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Use of grounded theory allows the researcher to collect data first, and then group the data conceptually prior to developing a theory, as opposed to the traditional scientific method which states that a specific hypothesis should be formed before data collection.

The Hirokawa et al. (2000) study has been included in various other researchers' work, including both communication scholars and research in other fields. Demiris et al. (2008) study group characteristics that contribute to poor group performance and reference the Hirokawa et al. (2000) study. It is also mentioned by Crott and Hansmann as an example of a study of group decision making using a free interaction process (2003). Crott and Hansmann (2003) form a model of group decision making, a concept that is opposite to the decision making through free interaction process studied by Hirokawa et al. (2000).

Hirokawa et al. (2000) give the reader a clearer understanding of the group members' perception of success and failure, and ultimately, what makes groups effective or ineffective. This concept is applicable to community development work since the field is fundamentally group-based and requires collaboration between many individuals.

Community development groups may need to consider how to engage their community in their work in a variety of communication mechanisms such as creating awareness, understanding persuasion and change management, or executing image repair strategies.

Keyton and Beck (2008) study characteristics of groups including group size, group goal, group member interdependence, group structure, and group identity in relation to three group processes which include leadership, decision making, and conflict management. Keyton and Beck (2008) created a rubric that examines the intersection of each of the group characteristics with each of the group processes. Group goal setting and group identity are key characteristics, and leadership and decision making are key group processes. Although these are internal dynamics and my project's focus is external communication, consideration of how the narratives were created is possibly an indicator of successful or unsuccessful community engagement. Keyton et al. (2008) examine organizational participation, buy-in, and collaboration. Keyton and her colleagues explain collaboration from an organizational perspective as "collaboration researchers variously propose that the phenomenon is both a structure for and the process of ways in which organizations and communities work to resolve common problems and explore new ideas" (2008, p. 337). The article, which is written from the mesolevel, simultaneously addresses collaboration between groups, organizations, and broad public communication. The authors offer valuable insight into how a community development group might design an effective collaborative effort through the following description:

> The mesolevel communicative model of interorganizational collaboration suggests that the bulk of collaborative communication occurs at the team level. That is the level at which relationships among individuals and organizations are revealed and acted upon, as it is the level at which strategic communication can be observed (p. 402).

Many community development groups, like the target subjects of this study, are working at the team level, thus making this study relevant to better understand strategic communication within the group and the public. In summary, organizational participation, buy-in, and collaboration all affect a community development group's efforts to engage the public in their activities.

In this literature review, an overview of relevant topics has been provided from communication scholarship as well as literature regarding best practices and principles on the community development field and related topics to give a better understanding of the environment in which the groups exist. Each of these readings provides the basis for understanding the factors likely shaping narratives generated by a group or members of community development groups. In this study, using communication theory from different methodological perspectives is an effective framework which will provide valuable insight regarding community development groups and how they can effectively engage public stakeholders into their efforts. Using three specific areas of narrative research, Fisher's narrative paradigm, organizational identity and culture, and group buy-in and collaboration distills the breadth of research regarding narrative methods into relevant topics which give insight into this particular study. For the scope of the project, each source described in the literature review reinforces the applicability of narrative rhetorical paradigm to community development groups and the valuable insight that conducting a narrative analysis will provide. After conducting this thorough analysis of relevant literature, the following research questions are posed:

RQ1: What themes are associated with community development group success?

RQ2: What themes are associated with community development group failure?

RQ3: What, if any, thematic differences exist between successful and unsuccessful

community development groups?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Using the method of analysis employed by Hirokawa et al. (2000) as a foundational basis, themes in narratives regarding group work are collected and discussed to better understand the significance of group dynamics in rural community development. As mentioned earlier, the Indiana-HTC program is the subject of this study. The program, which is offered by a collaboration of rural-focused government agencies and not-for-profit groups in partnership with state universities, guides rural cities and towns in Indiana by providing a framework for community development. The collaboration that makes up the state team includes the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, United States Department of Agriculture, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Ball State University's Building Better Communities, Indiana Association for Community and Economic Development, University of Southern Indiana, Indiana Grantmaker's Alliance, and the Indiana Rural Development Council. Indiana-HTC was launched in 2008 and was modeled after a successful program, which was created in Nebraska (Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, 2011).

Description of Program and Communities

The Indiana-HTC program is designed to provide rural communities with a framework for community development addressing common issues in smaller, more rural communities. The key ideas, or "pillars" as they are named in the framework, are: (1) entrepreneurship, (2) youth issues, (3) leadership, and (4) community wealth and assets (Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, 2011). As rural communities seek ways to address many of the economic issues raised in the background and literature

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review, as well as countless others, programs like Indiana-HTC are designed to give communities a place to begin their path to meet their desired results.

Participating communities are cities, towns, or counties in Indiana. They range from approximately 1,200 to 20,000 in population. The communities participating as a county could include each of the cities, towns, and unincorporated areas within a given county. Indiana-HTC has a pre-designed structure that the groups used and were allowed to modify. The basic group structure is organized with a community coordinator who supervises leaders of the four "pillars" of Indiana-HTC which have a designated "pillar chair" or leader who coordinates activities for the activities associated with that pillar. Each of the "pillar chairs" and "pillar committees" is responsible for creating and managing very different programs and activities. Some pillar activities are structured collaboratively with other pillars, but it is not a requirement of the Indiana HTC-program. Some pillars have more opportunities for external engagement with the community, depending on the types of activities the group decides to pursue. Communities are not limited to the four basic pillars defined by the program and many added additional pillars that they determined were appropriate for the local community. A meeting structure was not prescribed; however, participation in the program gave each team access to a site coach, a professional with the ability to facilitate and guide the community.

Beyond the adaptable structure of each local HTC team, no program activities are dictated to the community. Within their pillar teams, each local community develops programs and activities which accomplish the goal of that particular pillar. Some pillars have ongoing, frequent activities and some have limited, one-time activity. Communities received brief training, conducted by the state team, when they are first admitted to the

program and also follow up site visits from the state team in addition to the assistance from the site coach. However, activities of the group are developed by the community team, for their individual community. There are no restrictions on eligible activities set forth by the state team. The fourteen Indiana communities participating in the program are as follows: City of Alexandria, Decatur County, Fayette County, Town of Ferdinand, Fulton County, Greene County, Henry County, Lawrence County, Noble County, Owen County, Town of Oxford, Pike County, Washington County, and White County.

Description of Methodology

This study uses Hirokawa et al.'s model (2000) as its basis but adapts it to fit the scope of the project. Similar to the Hirokawa et al. (2000) study, stories about success and failure are collected retrospectively regarding group work from participating group members. However, the narratives collected in this study were evaluated using the seven themes identified in the foundational study, in contrast to Hirokawa et al.'s method, in which the authors let themes emerge using grounded theory. The seven emergent themes include: relationships, structure, process, members' emotions, communication, members' attitudes, and external conditions. There are also several other significant differences in this research model. First, the narratives address programs and activities in a generalized sense, instead of the narratives that Hirokawa et al. (2000) collected, which regarded a specific instance of group work. Second, the survey questions for this study were distributed via email, in contrast to the foundational study, in which they were distributed in a face to face setting. Face to face interaction was appropriate for the Hirokawa et al.'s study because the survey population consisted of students at one university. For this study, e-mail was more convenient to this study population because it could be completed

at the respondents' convenience in balance with their various other time commitments. Two narratives were requested via e-mail communication from each of the communities participating in the program. Fourteen emails were sent to the designated community coordinator of each community participating in Indiana-HTC. The survey directed the subject to provide two narratives: an instance of group success within the Indiana-HTC program regarding public communication efforts, and an instance of failure within the Indiana-HTC program regarding public communication efforts. The respondents then returned the surveys via email.

Each Indiana-HTC community was sent a survey with the following questions:

> Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, and programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

> Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, and programs that did not successfully engage members of your community.

The surveys were returned over a period of two weeks via email. Ten of 14 surveys were completed and returned. Any instance of the seven themes named by Hirokawa et al. (2000) were identified in each completed survey, which include relationships, group structure, group process, member emotions, group communication, member attributes, and external forces in both Question #1 and Question #2. Finally, the instances of each theme regarding each question were counted to determine the frequency of occurrence of each theme.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Identifying the frequency of occurrence of the themes identified by Hirokawa et al. (2000) yielded three predominant themes in both the stories describing group success and group failure: group relationships, group communication, and group structure. In Question One, 14 instances of group relationships were identified, 11 instances of group communication were identified, and four instances of group structure were identified. Each of other themes had three or less instances in the narratives regarding success (Table 1). In Question Two, 11 instances of group communication were identified, eight instances of group structure, and four instances of group relationships (Table 2).

Results for Research Question One

Table 1. Instances of each theme in the narratives describing group success:

Theme	Number of Instances
Relationships	14 (41%)
Group Communication	11 (32%)
Group Structure	4 (12%)
Group Process	3 (9%)
Member Emotions	1 (3%)
Member Attitudes	1 (3%)
External Forces	0 (0%)

Total instances: 34

Research question one sought to discover which themes are associated with group success among the Indiana-HTC groups surveyed. The results of a one way Chi Square analysis ($X^2 (6) = 36.9$, p. $< .05$) show that the themes were not equally distributed.

Specifically, as shown above in Table 1, group relationships were the most frequent emergent theme in the narrative survey results regarding success. Several respondents explained how the group's relationships with individuals external to their team members were attributed to group successes with community engagement practices. The following quotation, demonstrates these successes:

> The simple act of bringing people together to share information about their events, activities, etc. seems to be the most positive development. We are a large very fragmented community, allowing people to network with the purpose of 'what are you doing and how can we work together?' seems powerful.

In this instance, the Indiana-HTC program served as a common topic from which some community members developed new relationships. Another example Indiana-HTC group success highlighted the same concept, only specifically noted that that community members working together were leaders from different local organizations:

> I can think of two approaches that were, or have the potential to be, unusually successful in engaging members of the community. The first one was a series of seminars that brought some of the community's leaders together monthly over a seven-month period to focus on enhancing the governance of their nonprofit organizations. In the process, these leaders were also exposed to the details of the HTC program and began to form relationships that would encourage their working together, perhaps to further HTC goals.

This quote and the one above are two examples of relationships forged with individuals, both in leadership roles and in the general citizenry, from successful Indiana-HTC group activity.

Many of the respondents cited partner organizations and credited their successes to their relationships not only with individual community members, but also with other community groups. One respondent cited four examples of other organizations which helped them gain success, as illustrated by the quotations "the Parks Department is

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sponsoring this program in collaboration with the CEC, Fayette Regional Hospital, and HTC efforts," "Session presenters will represent a mix of business, spiritual, and civic leaders," "This is a self-sustaining program through the Connersville Parks Department in conjunction with the CEC, to provide activities and social stimulation to kids during the summer while providing a reasonably priced, educational, and activity filled option for parents to use for childcare" and "One of the tasks the Entrepreneurship pillar wanted to complete in the first year was to create a Small Business Expo where local government officials, bankers, accountants, lawyers, Economic Development, Small Business Development Corp, Growth Start Indiana, and other resources available in the same place." Relationships with partner organizations were named as an instrumental way to communicate with the surrounding community. For example, one respondent stated:

> Coordinating/distributing communication instruments through a variety of organizations e.g. schools, local service clubs and various professional organizations like LEDOs (Local Economic Development Organizations), regional alliances, engineering firms, attorneys, city/county agencies such as Extension.

Partner organizations were also effective in gaining community participation not only in marketing and awareness efforts, but also in programming efforts, as indicated in this statement:

> We just recently completed our first Entrepreneurship Investigation Boot Camp at Frontier High School in White County, another HTC initiative. We held a kick-off event in December at the high school for the business and agriculture classes with 24 students attending. The Director and Administrative Assistant with the White County Economic Development Organization helped organize the program, schedule speakers and tours, and prepare class material. The Ag and Business teachers instructed the students during the workshop.

From these responses as well as the results of the chi square analysis, it is apparent that relationships with key individuals as well as other groups and organizations were a driver of success for many Indiana-HTC programs.

Many instances of group relationships also overlapped with instances of group structure in the survey results. Relationships with local elected officials, civic and philanthropic groups, and hobby groups may play a role in distributing a message from the Indiana-HTC group to the community. One group lists a Small Business Expo as a success, which combined communication resources of "local government officials, bankers, accountants, lawyers, economic development, the Small Business Development Corporation, Growth Start Indiana, and other resources." Another example described an Entrepreneurship Investigation (ESI) Boot Camp program that was structured to include the local school system and local economic development organization, and the relationships between the organizations fostered successful distribution of awareness and other external communication regarding the program.

The results of this survey lend support to the role of groups in community development efforts and the impact of collaborative, multi-organization partnerships. Relationships were one of the three significant themes of this study and each of the groups which identified relationships as a driver of success listed various partner organizations. Given the demonstrated importance of relationships to group success, Dr. Fluhardy's (2010) notion of working in collaboration with other communities and leveraging resources is supported as a key piece of economic success in American rural communities.

The second most frequent theme derived from the narratives describing success was group communication. This emergent theme encompasses not only the group's desired message, but also vehicles or means used for communication. Interpersonal, one-to-one communication was mentioned in several of the success narratives collected in the surveys. Many survey responses indicated that communication was a key driver of their group's success or failure. Personal communication was noted as the most effective vehicle of communication to garner interest in group activities in the following statement:

> As far as creating awareness- we used every possible method to reach the broadest audience. We sent personal invitations, emails, newspaper articles (stories devoted to the cause or event) and even though many claim to like e-mail..it was a personal phone call that was most effective. Please remember that Facebook was not nearly as prevalent in 2007-2008 as it is today. Today we have nearly 3,000 friends on Facebook, so getting a message out now is a little different. But, I must state that the personal phone call is still the most effective method of creating interest and involvement. People love to be asked personally! Dropping by and asking face-to-face is also an outstanding way to get people on board (guilt them into it if you have to).

Several groups also cited examples of collaborating with other groups who used one-on-one communication to get the word out about HTC programming. Some examples of involved groups mentioned included local schools, local service clubs and various professional organizations like LEDOs (Local Economic Development Organizations), regional alliances, engineering firms, attorneys, city/county agencies such as Purdue Cooperative Extension Service. This premise reinforces the relationships theme. Many of the groups not only created relationships that helped their group succeed, but also used their partnerships to effectively communicate with their target audience.

Mentions of social media use and online tools were common in regards to creating awareness and engagement in HTC programming. Several survey respondents

cited social media and online tools as some of the most effective means they used of

communicating with their target audiences, particularly Facebook:

> Almost immediately upon the acceptance as one of Indiana's HTC pilot
> class of communities, we began building our presence on Facebook. We
> first targeted our students and learned rather quickly that we would,
> shortly thereafter, get their parents as our Facebook friends as well. We
> currently have approximately 1,500 Facebook friends following us now
> and this has become invaluable to us.

Another online tool that was mentioned in the completed surveys was online assessment

websites, suggesting that not only did the participating communities disseminate

information successfully using online tools, but used them to receive information.

Participant communities were able to better engage others using online tools, as

illustrated by the comment, "we used Survey Monkey, a free internet interviewing tool to

gain public opinion on local issues- the process was inexpensive, quick, and accessible."

The third emergent theme identified in the narratives regarding successful group

interaction was group structure. Respondents identified the manner by which their

internal group's behavior was structured led to success or failure with external

constituents. For example, one respondent described how they adapted a theme to fit the

Indiana-HTC program, and how structuring their group's activities through the theme

drove participation and community engagement. This particular group cited their unique

group structure as one of their key drivers of success:

> We determined early on in the process that we did not want HTC to be
> perceived in the community as just another strategic plan, so we started
> out utilizing a sports theme for promoting HTC events. The participants
> were members of a team, such as the Leadership team, instead of members
> of a committee, the chairperson was the coach and our meetings were
> called team huddles. We did not hold Town Hall meetings, we held
> Season Openers and we were developing a game plan instead of a strategic
> plan. The HTC core team, made up of pillar coaches, determined that it

would be important to have a quick-win with HTC in order to gain momentum and increase community participation.

Group structure was mentioned as overlapping with the other two emergent themes, relationships and group communication. Some respondents said their group was structured to work together with other organizations, which led to success for their Indiana-HTC program. For example, "The members of the Foundation staff have become more involved with committees in the community whose concentration is economic development, quality of life, and education." This statement is an example of the theme of group structure overlapping with the theme of relationships as the group interacts with partner organizations. Group structure as an emergent theme demonstrates how communities can shape single or multiple organizations on the mesolevel through relationships. As suggested by Keyton (2008), collaboration is performed at team level through group relationships, as illustrated by the quotation "by which relationships among individuals and organizations are revealed and acted upon, as it is the level at which strategic communication can be observed" (p. 402). Survey respondents said that relationships were "necessary" and managing relationships was an effective way to build the community.

Results of Research Question Two

Table 2. Instances of each theme in the narratives describing lack of success:

Theme	Number of Instances
Group Communication	11 (41%)
Group Structure	8 (30%)
Relationships	4 (15%)
Group Process	3 (10%)
Member Attitudes	1 (4%)
Member Emotions	0 (0%)
External Forces	0 (0%)

Total number of instances: 27

Research question two sought to discover which themes are associated with group

failure or lack of success among the Indiana-HTC groups surveyed. The results of a one

way Chi Square analysis (X^2 (6) = 27.69, p. < .05) show that the themes were not equally

distributed. Specifically, as shown above in Table 2, identifying the frequency of

occurrence of the themes identified by Hirokawa et al. (2000) yielded the same

predominant themes in both the narratives describing lack of group success and group

failure: group relationships, group structure, and group communication. Relationships,

the most frequent theme in the success narratives, were cited as the third most frequent

theme in the narratives describing lack of success. One respondent cited a lack of

relationships with professionals, or even the lack of such professionals in their respective

community, observing "Many rural HTC initiatives do not have the professional talent

available, or it is beyond budget resources to engage professional graphic designers, copy

writers, or web masters to create the specific promotion piece." Another group cited a

failed promotional booth at the county 4-H fair that was coordinated through other

organizations. The lack of mention of relationships in the narratives describing lack of

success is also telling. While many of the narratives describing success featured

relationships or partnerships with other organizations as a key driver of success, the

narratives describing lack of success did not have as many mentions of relationships.

Group communication was named often in the narratives describing lack of

success. Traditional news media as a group communication vehicle garnered mixed

results from survey respondents. Though many had positive experiences, such as the

respondent who stated "the newspaper has assisted in promoting success of the

committee, which continues to increase awareness and encourage others to participate,"

other respondents felt that their group's efforts were lacking in regards to news media as

a vehicle for communication. For example, one group noted:

> Another area we felt lacking was the use of press releases and public
> service announcements to share the HTC message to even greater
> numbers. We always have a camera at the time of events, but we never
> seem to get the picture and a press release prepared and delivered in a
> timely manner.

Others cited lack of resources as a constraint to effectively engaging community

members using traditional news media, including:

> In many rural areas, there are not the local newspapers, TV or radio outlets
> available for promoting events and activities. If rural areas do have one of
> those outlets, usually the physical space given (e.g. newspaper) or air time
> provided (e.g. radio) is often very limiting and inadequate to achieve
> proper outcome.

Another responded that traditional media actually did work, but priorities of community

members took precedence over the HTC group. The respondent reported that:

Generally speaking, we used the local newspaper, radio, and various e-mail lists (such as the Chamber listserv) to get the word out to the general public about events, activities, and programs. While we had what we considered to be "good" community involvement, the number of people who came to our events in the past as part of the general public was not high. What we learned is that people live such busy lives that if they don't understand the importance of these meetings they won't take time to attend. Or, there may be a sense of apathy that if there is no direct link as to how the program benefits the individual then they don't take the time to get involved. Both personal contact and having a coordinator in charge seemed crucial to our success.

As evidenced by these responses, a group's ability to use available communication tools to communicate with external publics proved difficult to navigate for many groups.

Communication strategies were also mentioned as a lack of success regarding group communication. The surveys revealed the group's communication initiatives were often experimental in nature. One respondent observed, "We tried everything and anything we could to try and spread the word to members of our community just on the outskirts of our community. I don't know that there is truly anything that didn't work communications-wise. However, there have been events, activities, and programs that haven't been as well received." As the groups continue to mature as an organization, some of the lack of group communication strategy may be less likely to occur.

Group structure was the third most frequent occurring theme in the narratives describing success and the second most frequently occurring theme in the narratives describing lack of success. In contrast to the group that structured their Indiana-HTC program using a sports theme and said that the group's structure was one of the group's biggest successes mentioned earlier, others mentioned group structure as one of the biggest barriers to success that the group experienced. For example, one respondent said the importance of designing a marketing "pillar" or promotional function into the HTC

group's structure and expressed "we totally agree with the concept of adding a dedicated marketing and outreach group to support each of the pillars." Other respondents recognized group structure as an overarching barrier to success, such as this subject, who explains "we've tried too hard, dissecting, bisecting, resurrecting our purpose and goals. We've tried to create a BIG impact, when the small is what gets us moving". Another respondent describes the following issue regarding group structure "we also need to work out a better succession plan from the beginning, so the CoreTeam does not burn out." A third respondent who explains how structure can impede success said "the Wealth Retention Pillar is an area that we did not have great success in starting a specific HTC initiative." It is clear from these responses that many groups had identified group structure issues that they would change if the opportunity was available.

Similar to the responses to Question One, instances of the themes often overlapped or were mentioned in the same statement as other themes. The overlaps could imply a dependent relationship exists between themes in the narratives. The third research question of this study explores the relationship between the seven themes and their significance in predicting successful or unsuccessful group behavior.

<u>Results of Research Question Three</u>

A Chi Square analysis comparing instances of success and instances of failure coded by each respective theme did not demonstrate statistical significance ($X^2(5) = 9.66$, $p = .85$). Additional analysis was conducted by comparing standard frequencies (as expressed as a proportion), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Standard Frequencies:

Theme	z-value (95%)	Significant?
Relationships	1.96	Yes
Group Communication	0.41	No
Group Structure	1.42	No
Group Process	-0.13	No
Member Emotions	-0.12	No
Member Attitudes	-0.56	No
External Forces	No instances	

Using the z-test shows the relationships theme is a significant indicator of group success or failure, given the parameters of this study. However, none of the other six themes showed significance. The results of this analysis could indicate that the themes identified in the foundational study are not appropriate themes to use in a one-size-fits-all manner of analysis of group behavior. However, given the small sample size and relatively low number of instances of themes in the narratives, the power of a statistical hypothesis test is used to measure the test's ability to reject the null hypothesis. An analysis using the G*Power statistical program shows the power to detect statistical significance for the results of Question One with 34 instances of success (Power = .65). The power to detect statistical significance for the results of Question Two, instances of failure (Power= .62). In the case of both Question One and Question Two, both are low values of statistical power. The power to detect statistical differences of the results of Question Three is slightly higher (Power = .74). Overall, the power analysis

demonstrates that too few surveys were distributed and not enough instances were observed to make a firm statistical assessment of the data. Given this study was exploratory in nature and the subjects were part of a pilot program, the data does give us an indication that the most-occurring themes do indeed affect the group's behavior. However, further investigation would be required to prove the hypothesis with statistical evidence.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Using the seven categories defined by Hirokawa et al. (2000), which include relationships, structure, process, members' emotions, communication, members' attitudes, and external conditions, the most common themes in the narratives collected in this study in the case of both success and failure were communication, relationships, and group structure. Each of the narratives collected in the survey organizes personal experiences in some way to help the writer understand their respective group, as defined by Fisher (1984) and Foss (2004). The survey results also give context to the research aforementioned by Keyton et al. (2008), giving several instances of how community organizations work together to gain traction and make their community a better place to live.

Before solidifying the three emergent themes from this study as the answer to struggling community development groups, the absoluteness of Hirokawa et al.'s (2000) seven themes should be considered. This study was limited to the themes identified in that study, which was a survey of college undergraduate students. The seven themes were developed using grounded theory and were not pre-defined by the researcher. Though other research exists to support the seven themes defined by the Hirokawa et al. study are applicable to other groups, those themes are certainly not the only answer to understanding group success or failure. In regards to community development groups, other methods of analysis, such as the more formal model of group decision making developed by Crott and Hansmann (2003), may be appropriate to apply to these groups. Kramer and Berman (2001) also uses grounded theory to identify themes, or categories derived from narratives collected from undergraduate students, similar to Hirokawa et al.

(2000). The categories and subcategories identified in their study are different than the seven themes identified in the Hirokawa et al. study, but also yielded interesting results. Though this study does not seek to prove or disprove any of the methods mentioned above, the difference in the results between the studies gives us reason to consider that each offer unique results to a community development group which may be helpful. However, no method has been determined to address which is best to answer these particular research questions.

Conducting a replication of the original Hirokawa et al. study using the subjects of this research would likely yield different or additional themes to help explain the group's behavior. Perhaps, since the original themes were developed from a study of undergraduate students, some of the themes are not relevant in this case. The students were asked to give an instance of group success or failure in any group they had participated in over the course of their lives. The Indiana-HTC participants in this study were asked to respond to the question regarding a specific group in which they participate. The study population and the context of the studies are both quite different. However, this study, using the replicated themes from Hirokawa et al., does provide an insightful view into how the groups participating in Indiana-HTC function.

Another significant difference between Hirokawa et al. (2000) study and the results of this research is the meaning and context of each theme. Given the differences in the group, program, and method mentioned above, it is likely that "group communication" in the foundational study had a different meaning and set of instances that "group communication" in this study. Each category certainly has similarities and overlapping characteristics; however, the specific boundaries of exactly what did or did

not qualify an instance under a particular theme are likely different. Further investigation is needed to define the themes and qualifying characteristics, as well as the themes' applicability to other study populations.

The results of the survey and the three emergent themes are relevant to the overall purpose and research questions of this study. The three themes identified from the narrative surveys offer insight and context into exactly how small, grassroots community development groups can actively shape their group's successes and failures with communication. Communication vehicles and techniques, group dynamics, and relationships, the three predominant themes established by this study, are all key indicators of group success or failure with a given community development initiative. Despite facing barriers to success which may or may not be determined by the rural environment, narrative is a sense making tool that not only helps community groups tell their group's stories to the external public, but also can be used to make sense of information communicated to them. No matter the vehicle of communication, groups continue to write the story of the community. Each group must tell who they are, what they do, and make a compelling case why external publics should support their organization. Community development as a practice relies not only on programs or activities, but also communication with the public to determine their effectiveness.

Relevance

The results of this study are relevant to the Indiana-HTC program for many reasons. Since Indiana-HTC is a pilot program, this study offers a reflection of actions that were successful and also actions that were not successful, and documents those for future program participants to use. Many group members of Indiana-HTC have no

experience with any type of formal public communication strategy and successfully

creating awareness and generating engagement in the group's programs seems like a

mystery that requires extensive training or job experience to execute. The results of this

study demonstrate that very simple concepts that all individuals are familiar with,

relationships, group structure, and group communication can be drivers of success with

public communication.

This study also offers a thoughtful reflection of the manner in which actual

participants interacted with the media and used online tools to create engagement with

Indiana-HTC. Web communication, particularly social media, was mentioned as a

significant piece of several success stories. As the Facebook revolution has established a

strong foothold in rural America as well as the rest of the nation and world, it remains to

be seen how instant availability of information helps or harms smaller groups. In the case

of the Indiana-HTC communities in this study, it seems that social media was a highly

successful means of communication with the public and was sometimes noted as the

exclusive means of communication. Earning traditional media has always been a

challenge in rural communities and remains that way, according to the survey

respondents in this study. Print and radio media had mixed results for these survey

respondents and television was not even mentioned as a vehicle of communication. It is

likely none of the communities in the study has a television station located in the

community and some are on the far outskirts of any local television station's viewer

reach.

This study also has relevance to community development as a practice. Since

community development is a non-scientific process, what is effective in one community

will not always be effective in another, given different inputs and environmental factors. However, each additional piece of group research adds to the cumulative knowledge and understanding of what makes communities progress or decline. Even though some questions remain about the themes of this study as true indicators of success and failure, it still demonstrates the necessity of groups to successful community development. Also, this survey shows willingness to try and fail as well as test different avenues to see what is effective might be the key to success.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the results of this study. First, since Indiana-HTC is a pilot program, there is no historical precedent established for success or failure with any given part of the program, related to communication or otherwise. As with any pilot program, much of the group's activity and interaction was conducted in an exploratory context. The state team, as well as the community teams, went through periods of rapid change as they adapted to the new program.

Also, a significant limitation to the results is that the total pool of potential respondents is very small. The survey had a high response rate, but the small amount of participants in the program to date is a limiting factor to the data collected. As mentioned earlier, there is no data from previous years to reference, either. Given the small amount of surveys returned, it is difficult to hinge any definitive conclusions on these responses. If this method was applied again to this group, requiring more than one member of the Indiana-HTC team to complete the survey might have produced relevant results.

The format of the responses given by survey respondents was widely varied which made data analysis difficult. Even though the foundational method was modified

to fit a narrative regarding program or activity happening over a period of time, rather than a specific instance of group activity, the format and content of the results was very diverse. More specific wording of the questions might yield more uniform responses. Moreover, even though the pool of respondents expressed that email was preferred, distributing the survey face-to-face would allow the opportunity for the respondent to ask the researcher clarification questions. In hindsight, a more structured survey might have generated more standard results, which might have produced additional relevant study findings.

Opportunties for Future Research

Opportunities for future research extend beyond the seven themes identified by Hirokawa et al. For example, scholars could follow Hirokawa's model and use the principle of Grounded Theory to identify emergent themes specific to the new study. The method of this study could be applied to additional respondents by designing a study that not only assesses the team members and their perspective on Indiana-HTC group's success or failure but also the general community's perspective on the Indiana-HTC group's success or failure. Also, a longitudinal study of participants in this program as new communities are added over the years would yield a long-term perspective on these themes. In terms of generating research that contributes to community development as a practice, the results of this study could also be applied to other community development groups to better understand rural communities through the narrative paradigm of communication. Applying this method to other rural development groups could provide valuable insight into group dynamics in smaller communities as well as the manner in

which rural communities function as a whole, which could be applied to rural development in a larger context.

This study also prompts the question of the need for further investigation of the external perception of rural communities and values on a more general scale. Could negative stereotypes or generalizations about the rural population of Indiana and other states in the U.S. create a higher barrier to successful public engagement in rural-related programs? In addition, do nay-saying or negative attitudes held by local residents factor into external perception of rural communities? Even if external perception is not necessarily detrimental, an opportunity may exist for rural communities to create a more positive perception of their specific community and of rural life in general. Both external perception of rural communities, as well as internal forces which drive external perception of rural communities, would be insightful avenues of study related to this topic. This concept also provides an opportunity for a critical study of rural residents as a marginalized group.

Conclusion

In summary, this study investigates community development groups' success or failure in public communication efforts using narrative communication theory. Using Hirokawa et al.'s (2000) framework for group success and failure, three emergent themes which are linked to group success or failure are identified: communication vehicles, group structure, and relationships. This study gives perspective to successful identification of effective tactics that groups can use to engage community members in community and economic initiatives by means of public communication.

Narratives play a powerful role in communities. Each community participating in the HTC program tells its story through the narratives of individuals, media, and programming. The aggregated stories of the communities make up the story of Indiana-HTC. The results of this study expand upon the available research regarding community development using communication theory. The study also serves as a working set of best practices for communities joining the HTC program. As rural community leaders continue to pursue efforts to make their respective locale a better place to live, a narrative approach to understanding multiple discourses created by community and group dynamics gives insight into drivers of success or failure related to communication strategies.

APPENDIX A

Survey Results

Survey results have been reproduced as returned by the respondents and have not been

edited for grammar, punctuation, or other errors.

Survey 1

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

As far as creating awareness - we used every possible method to reach the broadest audience. We sent personal invitations, emails, newpaper articles (stories devoted to the cause or event) and even though many claim to like email... it was a personal phone call that was the most effective. Please remember that Facebook was not nearly as prevalent in 2007-08 as it is today. Today we have nearly 3,000 friends on Facebook, so getting a message out now is a little different. But, I must state that the personal phone call is still the most effective method of creating interested and involvement. People love to be asked personally! Dropping by and asking face-to-face as also an outstanding way to get people on board (guilt them into it if you have to).

Meetings themselves ranged across the board.

- We brought in outside facilitators to share ideas of where we (the HTC team) hoped to see the community go and grow and how they could get involved and make a difference.

  o This was good to get people to because they love to hear from the experts. However, be certain to have heard the speaker lead a meeting before you let them lead one for the 'best of the best' in your community, because you might only get one shot!

- We held public meetings to brainstorm with everyone.

- We did neighborhood meetings - have someone invite there neighbors for snacks, to discuss the future of the community.

- We started an annual Strawberry Social that has had everywhere from 500 to 1500 participants.

- Booth at the local 4-H Fair.

- Taste of Alexandria - where all restaurants brought finger food to showcase themselves and then we held a public meeting. Food brings people.

- We teamed up with the local paper during election cycles and sponsored a 'Voter Forum' to allow the citizens to meet and hear from those running for office.

- Build a team of "Believers" that will stick close to the project(s) and help sell them to their friend and families.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

STOP IT WITH THE ACRONYMS!

- It is so easy to start talking about agencies and whatnot but their initials rather than their actual name. Seems reasonable, but if you want to make intelligent people feel stupid talk over their heads. And even though they may seem attentive at a meeting, if they can't explain what they heck the

meeting was about because they didn't understand the industry jargon...

they ain't coming back and they ain't going to be a cheerleader for you

and your project.

- o KISS - Keep It Simple Salespeople (and if you don't think you in

  sales, then you really don't get community development).

Probably... the things that have hurt the most... was having highly qualified people [in

community planning and development] help us with public meetings... that had no skills,

in the art of presenting ideas and creating enthusiasm. Know you team!

- This can be quite challenging - if you are attempting to get grants and the

  experts are speaking a language you don't understand but one on one they

  are able to communicate adequately. This same individual in a group

  setting can literally turn off the most influential people in your

  community.

Don't hold too many meetings!!!

- Unfortunately, grants require a certain number of meetings and that is just

  the way it goes. But, be careful not to have too many meetings before

  having an ACTION PLAN to do something. Get physical and quickly!

  - o Paint something, hang a new sign, clean the town square or

    whatever, but do it as a group. We didn't do this soon enough and

paid a price for it. We got back on track but it took a while and we

lost some supporters who wanted to work and not talk.

Be sure to stay broad in your perspective.

- Based on our HTC team, our Economic Development Person had the
  greatest amount of time and drive, subsequently his pillar had the most
  significant results. And, it literally killed the others drive - they felt left
  out and unable to compete. Even though, in no way, was this a
  competition - it's still people giving their all for their community! When
  one gets more notoriety and recognition then the others... it stings. We all
  still love each other but my personal ability to devote enormous amounts
  of time and energy to the cause did make others feel less important. They
  all still back me and my passion but I did outshine them and it left several
  important areas untouched for some time.

Based on our experience -- the only really effecting method of getting participants in any

event was to make personal contact. Email seemed to give people an easy way of

responding, in advance, as to why they could not attend. The newspaper seemed to open

the door for questions afterward, "Hey, how did the meeting go? Sorry, I could make it,

but..." All in all, ever method of communications was short lived except personal

communication.

Survey 2

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

We used our Community Coordinator as a Chief Information Office (CIO). We asked all pillar chairs to make sure that anything new or anything that need to be communicated be directed to her. The CIO/CC then made sure that she made sure that the information was communicated through fliers, newspaper, facebook and our radio outlet. We found this to be most successful and did it purposefully to make sure that we caught every market and every generation at the way THEY received information. It was interesting that all the avenues of communication were received equally, meaning, every way was utilized and there was not one more dominate than the other. We asked people coming to the opportunity retreat how they heard about the event, and we learned that all the avenues of communications that we used were utilized. This confirmed to us that we must use all these avenues of communications every time we need to communicate to the community, not just one or two.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

We found that just putting things on the webpage or face book was not enough. We still have enough people that receive the newspaper and talk at the coffee shop and saw the flier that we learned that we cannot just use electronic media alone to get information out. We thought we might try to make the change now, instead of later, but we found out quickly that we needed several types of media to get the word out of HTC events.

Survey 3

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

Leadership Pillar

The leadership pillar's ultimate goal is to create a leadership development program to be utilized by the businesses and community members in Fayette County. The cost of the program will be somewhere in the range of $100 per class with the entire program consisting of 5 to 6 classes. In order to market this program, the leadership pillar has designed a series of leadership luncheons, designed to serve as an overview of these classes.

The leadership luncheon series consists of five, 90 minute mini-sessions that focus on leadership as an individual choice while exploring the role of the individual in contributing to a better workplace and a more diverse, healthier community. A partnership was formed between the CEC and the Chamber of Commerce to ensure the success of this series. The Chamber currently offers a monthly "Network at Noon" lunch for their members. This leadership luncheon has been presented as a program through the CEC's Leadership Academy in conjunction with the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce.

The luncheons are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Due to adverse weather conditions the first one to be held February 17th was rescheduled for the

following Wednesday. The cost of these luncheons is $10 per person. The first of the luncheons has yielded approximately 40 RSVP's. Should be Exciting!

Other dates: April 15, June 17, August 19, October 14

Update: June 14, 2010

Session #1:   "The Four Choices of Leadership – An Overview"

February 24

Do you focus on what's best for you, or do you work for the greater good of your organization and community? **The Four Choices of Leadership** focuses on understanding the impact of personal choice in the development of high performance teams, successful organizations, and progressive communities. This presentation will overview how to lead by example, create leaders of tomorrow through your own leadership today, and move and influence people to greater productivity.

Attendance: 27

Session #2:   "Trust and Credibility"

April 15

How do you learn to build trust and credibility? How do both of these values play a significant role in motivating people to work together as a cohesive team? Join us for this unique overview on what tools you need to create a strong sense of purpose and to make decisions as a group. Learn how to develop the necessary "buy-in and stay-in" to execute group decisions effectively.

Attendance: 35

Session #3: **"Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing"**

June 17

You've had significant discussion and come up with agreements in the meeting about the next steps. How many of these "agreements" have evaporated once the meeting is over? Explore the tools necessary to make effective group decisions via consensus, and learn how to diagnose and resolve deadlocks on issues to regain momentum.

Attendance: 25 enrolled to date.

Session #4: **"Putting the Organization and Its People First"**

Fayette County-August 19

Session #5: **"Improving the Doing"**

Fayette County-October 14

Update March 1, 2011

The Academy will continue the leadership luncheon sessions in 2011, beginning in April (one lesson learned from 2010 was to wait until after the winter months). Feedback from attendees suggested interest on topics such as leading by example, leadership during challenging times, motivation, and leadership methods for working with youth. The Academy will announce the leadership session schedule in mid-March. Session presenters will represent a mix of business, spiritual, and civic leaders.

Youth Pillar

The youth pillar is putting on a Spring Break "mini camp" designed for kids in grades K-6th. The camp consists of 3 days, March 22-24: Monday is Fitness Day run by HealthWorks, Tuesday is Arts/Sciences with the CEC's educational vans, and Wednesday is Sports directed by the Parks Department. The cost to students is $5/day. K-3 will attend from 8:30-11:00am and 4th – 6th will attend from 1:00-3:30pm.

The Parks Department is sponsoring this program in collaboration with the CEC, Fayette Regional Hospital, and HTC efforts. Our hope is that showing a partnership between these organizations will strengthen each one within the community.

Future plans are to grow a full summer camp program designed and maintained by the Connersville Parks and Recreation Department.

Update June 14, 2010

The spring break mini camp had an attendance of 8 kids. We think this was due to short notice to parents, many people took trips during vacation, and it was not an all day activity making it difficult for those parents working to leave their job to either drop off or pick up their child.

Connersville Parks, the CEC, and HTC have collaborated to design **Summer Discovery at the Park:** a summer daycare/recreation camp available to kids during the 10 weeks of summer break. Hours are Monday-Friday 7:00-5:30. Cost is $15/day /child, $13/day for a 2nd child, and $11/day for additional children. There are no requirements as to how often a child needs to attend to "save a spot" as many other day care providers require.

The camps coordinator, Darrell Drew has designed a program filled with activities to keep kids off the couch this summer. Just a few of the activities are Wednesday @ the movies, swimming at the park pool, weekly visits from the CEC's science van, bi-weekly visits to the bookmobile, guest speakers to educate about various subjects, and DodgeBall!

A week into the camp and it is Very Successful. We have 50 kids registered and each day has had 25 or more kids in attendance. We currently have 12 counselors employed through the CEC for this camp. Many businesses donated supplies and money to make the launch of this camp a huge success.

Update March 1, 2011

Summer Discovery at the Park has turned out to be a great success for the youth and parents in our community. The camp was available throughout the summer with the exception of one vacation week for the Director. There was an average attendance of 30 kids per day. At the end of the summer, there was an abundance of "starter supplies" such as paper towels, water, and sanitary wipes; we also ended with a $6000 net profit. This is a self sustaining program through the Connersville Parks Department in conjunction with the CEC, to provide activities & social stimulation to kids during the summer while providing a reasonably priced, educational, and activity filled option for parents to use for childcare.

As a working mother of 2 grade school aged children, I will say this is by far the BEST program as a result of HTC to date!

Entrepreneur Pillar

The Entrepreneur Pillar has set a goal: to make it easier for individuals to start a new home-based business in Fayette County. They are currently working on 2 projects to accomplish this goal. One is to design a step-by-step guide called "How to Start a Business in Fayette County" to be published online. They are also planning to gather business and community members to rally for the changing of Connersville's zoning laws.

One of the tasks the Entrepreneur pillar wanted to complete in the first year was to create a Small Business Expo where local government officials, bankers, accountants, lawyers, Economic Development, Small Business Development Corp., Growth Start Indiana, and other resources available in the same place.

This was intended to be a recurring event to increase community support for small businesses. Many ideas centered around this event including having a mentor booth staffed by past recipients of the Small Business Person of the Year award, having classes on small business resources, Hub Zone sign up for existing businesses and information available about local business resources.

The Pillar set a date of August 12, 2009 for this Expo. Although attendance was low, the expo was considered a successful event.

Update May 19, 2010

The Entrepreneurial pillar has been part of a committee assembled by the Area Plan Commission to develop a Home Occupation Ordinance. A 2nd draft has been recently reviewed.

Two intentions:

1. To enable the entrepreneur by eliminating the old 1930's home occupation laws that do not reflect current technology advances that enable a person to work from home.

2. To protect the homeowner from businesses which are not suited for home occupation.

Three tier plan for involvement by the APC:

Tier 1- No permit required. No signage, no employees, no storage requirements, everything happens inside the home with no visible or audible evidence that there is a business.

Tier 2- APC Staff level approval required.

Tier 3- APC/BZA Board level approval required

Most of the remaining discussion involves the operation of the ordinance by the Area Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.

Group discussions for "How to start a business in Fayette County" will begin in June with a team building exercise. The 2nd Annual Small Business Expo is still in the hands of the EDG. The EP will offer volunteers to help set up and tear down the event. We will be discussing other marketing strategies to increase attendance.

Update March 1, 2011

Ron is attending the community leaders focus group for the small business aspect of Fayette County this week. Their work is relative to the work done on the Residential

Business Ordinance which we hope to become part of the new Fayette County

Comprehensive Plan. I'm not sure what the progress is of "How to Start a Business in

Fayette County"; I would say it is currently on hold.

Giving Pillar

The goal of the Giving Pillar, which consists of the current members of the

Fayette County Foundation Board of Directors, is to make funds available to current HTC

projects and other projects that will have a large impact in the community. The board has

been re-examining the current methods of grant-making at the Foundation to see if there

is a common area or areas in the community in which they could best focus their time and

available funds.

The board has identified 3 areas in which they feel change is necessary to improve

the community. They have divided into 3 groups to analyze the education, economic

development, and quality of life in Fayette County. At the next board meeting, Anna has

invited individuals to speak about the current events within these areas of the community.

Update June 14th, 2010

The summer grant cycle is a maximum request of $500 with letters of intent due

to the Foundation office by July 1st. Many HTC projects have been encouraged to apply.

Update March 1, 2011

The summer grant cycle ended with 12 projects receiving funding from the

Foundation. As a direct result of HTC efforts the Connersville Jaycee's was awarded

$500 for an entrance sign for the new John Conner Nature Preserve Trail. The Whitewater Valley Arts Association was awarded $500 for brochures that is expected to help with touring of their county-wide barn quilt trail.

We awarded grants to 5 organizations in the fall. Three are HTC related. The WVRR received $1500 to purchase new entrance signs for their organization as several thousand people visit Connersville annually to ride the train. The parks department will be renovating current and adding a new basketball courts as well as making their volleyball court to standard with the $15,000 grant they received. The Link received $5,500 in funds to launch their Team LEAD project at the middle school. This program is focused on training kids as mentors and leaders so they can be leaders in their school. The participants in Team LEAD then teach what they have learned to the elementary students in after school program.

The Foundation grant committee will be meeting March 4 to discuss the goals of the committee and to see what direction we would like to go with community grants.

The members of the Foundation staff have become more involved with committees in the community whose concentration is economic development, quality of life, and education.

Anna has been a member of the Fayette County Tourism Board for the last year. She was just recently appointed to the EDG board and the Historic Preservation Committee. She is also involved in the committee which is working on the county comprehensive plan. Loree has recently been appointed to the Chamber of Commerce board. Working on some change!

The Whitewater Valley Railroad and Tourism

The members of this group have 2 goals. The long-term goal is to encourage the community to support the efforts of the Whitewater Valley Railroad. They have much construction to be completed which will give them an area to work on their rail cars as well as a Railroad Museum to share history. The city is currently in negotiations with land owners to ensure the purchase or trade of land that could make this goal attainable. Next will be the task of acquiring funds for these renovations.

The short-term goal of this group is to market and promote the community and its activities during large events such as Thomas the Train. There have been conversations about the possibility of having tours of Elmhurst and other historical areas during events that draw a large crowd.

Recently Anna was appointed to the tourism board. The next meeting is scheduled for March 16th. Anna plans to play a very active role on the tourism board in hopes that the board as a whole will play an active role as promoters of Fayette County. An investigation will begin into the collection of the inn-keepers tax which is currently collected from only one business in town.

Update June 14, 2010

Tourism is preparing a general leaflet available by distribution or website download. This leaflet will contain several areas of interest that are all within walking distance of each other. Plans are to have this ready for distribution by June 18 in time for the first weekend of Thomas the Train. Additional leaflets will be printed containing

information such as historical places of interest, barn quilts, and yummy restaurants for visitors to explore while driving through Fayette County.

Update March 1, 2011

We did have pamphlets to pass out during Thomas. Designed by us; they were fabulous! The next event was Polar Express…we held the annual Winter Festival which could have been much more successful but the leaders of this committee were not open to change from previous festivals. As they schedule this "Winterfest" the day after Thanksgiving we cringe because that is clearly not even winter! We are seriously considering a change to the "Fall parade & festival" with turkey bowling and a kiddie parade!

The tourism board is very frustrating for Anna because it is very disorganized, too small with only 5 members, and includes folks whose priorities do not really seem to be tourism in FC.

There are still plans for a Permanent Farmers Market in Fayette County. Members of this group would like to test a market located in an area such as Expo Hall to see if there would be community support. Cathy McDivitt, head of this group, has inquired about grants through the Foundation for start-up of such a project.

I have also investigated the possibility of the CEC building as a location for a Farmers Market. The building is available but would need a few renovations such as lighting and attention to an area that floods when raining.

Chris Craig is willing to meet and show the building to members of this group and discuss the possibility of its use. A meeting has been set for February 24th between Chris and some of the committee members to look through the CEC building.

Update June 14, 2010

And it's still in the Old Kmart parking lot!

Trails and a Greenway

Members of this group were investigating the possibility of acquiring funds set aside from Smalley's Lake to begin to build a bike trail in Fayette County. The funds were acquired by the city and much of them were used for the clean-up of the Visteon Plant. Donna Stern plans to set up a meeting with the Mayor to discuss other opportunities available.

Update June 14, 2010

A meeting was held June 4th to discuss the possibility of starting trails around Smalley's Lake. The Mayor gave his support to start with the creation of this trail. Jerry Rader has agreed to donate time and materials to excavate this land and the Jaycees club members have agreed to donate time to do additional clearing using chainsaws. Donna is looking into the donation of a small shelter, the Mayor has spoken of a donated portable toilet, we have mulch available through the city, and the Jaycees are applying for a $500 mini grant from the Foundation to purchase road signs to Smalley's Lake.

Progress has recently been put on hold as we are awaiting a meeting between the Greenway committee, the parks department, and the Mayor for clarification of this project.

Update March 1, 2011

Project completed! Fall 2010 was the ribbon cutting for John Conner Nature Preserve & Trail. We have about a 1 mile trail around Smalley's Lake. The Jaycees are working on a project to build a shelter along the trail. The parks department is in charge of keeping the trail maintained. The plan is for some of the local civic clubs to take ownership and add more improvements this spring and summer.

Arts & Culture

Members of this group originally decided to market the cultural events in Fayette County through the community website. They have come to the conclusion that in order for this to be a successful avenue they would first have to market the website to the community.

Their current goal is to establish an area in the community, possibly at the train depot, where pamphlets and schedules of activities could be made available to the public. It is our hope that Anna will be able to get something like this worked out through the Tourism Board.

Update March 1, 2011

This group is still active. They have applied for a grant this cycle for the Banjo Players & Fiddlers. I think the plan is still to come up with some pamphlets to put in the train depot.

Recreation/Wellness Center

It has been confirmed through newspaper articles and conversations with individuals that Regenstrief Community Center is on its way to closing the doors. The need for a Recreation Center has definitely been defined. Our community grant writers have been asked to investigate the possibility of state and federal grants that may be available to communities for the construction of a Wellness Center.

A location has not been established; but, many are being considered. The possibility of using the Kmart building once they leave in May has been raised. This location is close to Robert's Park and could be linked right to the park using paths. Another building which may soon come available is the Walmart located on Park Road.

Update June 14, 2010

I want a Community Sports Complex or Athletic Center…found one that could be built for around 3 million…

Two-story, 43,900 square foot slab-on-grade building (32,800 square foot footprint/11,100 square foot mezzanine). The exterior materials of split-faced block and vertical metal panels cover masonry bearing walls and a pre-engineered steel frame. The building would house a gymnasium with three basketball courts, a running track, men's

& women's locker rooms & showers, three volleyball courts, team rooms, a community

room, weightlifting, batting, & golf practice. Nothing specific…

We just need the funding… ☺

Survey 4

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

The simple act of bringing people together to share information about their events, activities, etc seems to be the most positive development. We are a large very fragmented county, allowing people to network with the purpose of "What are you doing and how can we work together?" seems powerful.
Simple but true. The newspaper has assisted in promoting success of the committee, which continues to increase awareness and encourage others to participate.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

We've tried too hard, dissecting, bisecting, resurrecting our purpose and goals. We've tried to create BIG impact, when the small is what gets us moving.

Survey 5

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

In Ferdinand, almost immediately upon the acceptance as one of Indiana HTC's pilot class of communities, we began building our presence on facebook. We first targeted our students and learned rather quickly that we would, shortly thereafter, get their parents as our facebook friends as well. We currently have approximately 1,500 friends following us now and this took has become invaluable to us.

We also began collecting email addresses during every activity, event, or program— whether HTC-specific, Town-specific, or Chamber-specific—that we sponsored. These email addresses were transferred into listservs that we continue to build to this day. These have proven to be extremely valuable in disseminating any and all town information.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

We tried everything and anything that we could to try and spread the word to members of our community and those just on the outskirts of the community. I don't know that there is truly anything that didn't work communications-wise. However, there have been

events, activities, and programs that haven't been as well received. My communication

efforts tend to be the same for any event that we use (whether it be town-specific,

chamber-specific, or HTC-specific). We use flyers and posters, press releases, facebook,

the Town's website, and email listservs to help spread the word and, hopefully, foster

interest in the program, event, or activity.

Survey 6

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

I'm a site coach for three sites. I can think of two approaches that were, or have the potential to be, unusually successful in engaging members of the community. The first one was a series of seminars that brought some of the community's leaders together monthly over a 7-month period to focus on enhancing the governance of their nonprofit organizations. In the process, these leaders were also exposed to details of the HTC program and began to form relationships that would encourage their working together, perhaps to further HTC goals.

The second example, currently in the planning stage, is the re-formation of a leadership academy to be an "HTC academy" (not its actual name), which is designed to teach and enhance community leadership skills while focusing on each of the HTC pillars. The emphasis on real community issues, centered on HTC pillars over an extended period, as a means of developing skills should prove to be effective in engaging members of the community in HTC.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

I can't think of any tools or approaches that were mostly unsuccessful in engaging members of the communities I coached.

Survey 7

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

Indiana-HTC initiatives utilized a variety of communication tools and approaches to promote their activities including:

- Word-of-mouth.

- Letters of invitation.

- Brochures

- Fliers

- Information included in municipal utility billings & utility newsletters

- Coordinating/distributing communication instruments through a variety of organizations e.g. schools, local service clubs and various professional organizations like LEDOs, regional alliances, engineering firms, attorneys, city/county agencies such as Extension.

- Use of social media vehicles (e.g. Twitter, Face book).

- Use of websites.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

In many rural areas, there are not the local newspapers, TV or radio outlets available for promoting events and activities. If rural areas do have one of those outlets, usually the physical space given (e.g. newspaper) or air time provided (e.g. radio) is often very limiting and inadequate to achieve a proper outcome.

In addition to the limitations on the type of approaches rural initiatives have available to promote their events, often the biggest challenge is to design the physical appearance or use the right "copy" to attract the local audience to the event.

Many rural HTC initiatives do not have the professional talent available, or it is beyond budget resources to engage professional graphic designers, copy writers, or web masters to create the specific promotion piece.

Survey 8

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

Our local HTC initiative is named THRIVE-Noble County. For our kick-off we sent traditional paper invitations and had about 85% of invitees attend the event. We used 'Survey Monkey,' a free internet interviewing tool to gain public opinion on local issues – the process was inexpensive, quick and accessible. We have monthly Steering Committee meeting and are developing a 'Five to THRIVE,' a six- session course that demonstrates the five (we added one) community development areas in our county.

We've engaged a local weekly publication reporter to cover activities and events that add thriveability to our community. She posts that same information, including video, on her website.

http://www.youtube.com/user/KendallvilleTV?feature=mhum#p/a/u/0/QdQOaEDlSGk

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

We had a booth at the county-wide 4-H Fair that was an ineffective use of time. We have a website that is stagnate because we don't have the information or the resources to keep it fresh. Our Twitter and Facebook accounts are seldom accessed.

Survey 9

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

White County determined early on in the process that we did not want HTC to be perceived in the community as just another strategic plan, so we started out utilizing a sports theme for promoting our HTC events. The participants were members of a team, such as the Leadership Team, instead of members of a committee, the chairperson was the coach and our meetings were called team huddles. We did not hold Town Hall meetings, we held Season Openers and we were developing a game plan instead of a strategic plan.

The HTC Core Team, made up of the pillar coaches, determined it would be important to have a quick-win with HTC in order to gain momentum and increase community participation. Our community members had participated in several county-wide strategic planning sessions over the past decade and the one need that kept rising to the top of the list was leadership training, so the committee decided to focus all of its energy on the Leadership Pillar and the development of Leadership White County.

LEADERSHIP PILLAR:

The White County Extension Director serves as our Leadership Pillar Coach and was the lead for the design and implementation of Leadership White County. This highly

successful program's primary goals were to help participants learn new leadership skills, increase their knowledge of community issues, and increase civic enthusiasm. Classes are held during the winter months at various locations throughout the county. There were 31 participants in the 2009 class, 24 participants in the 2010 class, and the 2011 class is currently in session with 23 registered members. Classes meet for five hours each Wednesday for nine weeks, concluding with a graduation ceremony at Camp Tecumseh, a local YMCA Leadership Center.

Sessions are taught by Purdue Extension Specialists, area leaders, past graduates, and Leadership White County committee members. All resource materials, lunches and refreshments are included in the registration fee of $150. Corporate contributions and sponsorships help defray the additional program costs.

The 55 individuals who participated in the first two classes all completed evaluations stating they either strongly agreed or agreed that "as a result of Leadership White County, they are more confident regarding their leadership abilities". Many have indicated that they intend to become more active in community leadership and four graduates have gone on to seek public office. Leadership White County received its momentum from HTC.

The first two LWC classes were each given an assignment of creating a community project based on the information they gleaned from the program. The 2009 and 2010 classes both determined a priority is to involve and inform our youth of the opportunities available to them within their hometown.

YOUTH PILLAR:

The 2009 class gathered data and is working to develop a website to inform and educate our youth about civic involvement, community needs, and workforce opportunities. The 2010 class organized a county-wide youth chamber that will utilize the website as a means of communication.

The White County Youth Chamber (WCYC) is a student-run organization comprised of community minded 8th-12th graders. Members will learn leadership skills, professionalism, and be able to network with other students across the four school corporations in White County. WCYC members will lead the organization, being responsible for facilitating quarterly meetings, developing projects, and organizing events. Adult volunteers (Leadership White County class members, business leaders and community members) will provide background assistance.

The goal of the Youth Chamber is to develop active citizens for our community and our world. This will be accomplished by providing opportunity, support, and information for our youth. The organization will work with businesses and individual community members in making the program successful and sustainable. All funds will be administered through the White County Community Foundation, an affiliate of The Community Foundation of Greater Lafayette.

Establishing programs, such as internships and scholarships, will help to fulfill the WCYC's goals of positively impacting our communities and providing development opportunities for our youth. With the development of the Youth Chamber, another HTC Pillar is being served.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PILLAR:

We just recently completed our first Entrepreneurship Investigation (ESI) Boot Camp at Frontier High School in White County, another HTC initiative. We held a kick-off event in December at the high school for the business and agriculture classes with 24 students attending. The Director and Administrative Assistant with the White County Economic Development Organization helped organize the program, schedule the speakers and tours, and prepare the class material. The Ag and Business teachers instructed the students during the workshop.

ESI is an exciting, interactive, and comprehensive curriculum project designed for youth in grades 8 through 12. The Principal and Superintendent at Frontier High School, one of four school corporations in White County, committed to being the pilot school and will be helping to spread the program to the other high schools in the county.

ESI uses a variety of tools to help participants develop their entrepreneurial skills and find their business niche. Through exciting activities, tours to local businesses, case studies, and current technology, participants are transformed into budding entrepreneurs.

The ESI program supports the Entrepreneurship and Youth Pillars and increases community participation in the HTC process.

After completing all levels of the curriculum, youth will have the skills and tools to start their own business, as well as have a completed business and marketing plan—the "road map" to the entrepreneur's success. The final assignment for the ESI Boot Camp participants was to market their product or service to the community at a public event. The committee decided to use the high school Basketball Homecoming game to promote the young entrepreneurs' new ventures. The game was between Frontier and Twin Lakes, another school corporation in White County, which helped increase the community awareness and set the stage to expand the program in the future.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

One area we feel we could improve upon is the broad community awareness through use of various media. We were hoping to hold multiple public events, either luncheons or breakfast sessions, to keep the general public informed of our progress. Due to time constraints and busy schedules, we were not able to hold any additional public venues specific to HTC. However, we do continue to promote HTC at all of our related pillar activities.

Another area we felt lacking was the use of press releases and public service announcements to share the HTC message to even greater numbers. We always have a camera at the events, but we never seem to get the picture and a press release prepared and delivered in a timely manner.

We also need to work out a better succession plan from the beginning, so the Core Team does not burn out.

The Wealth Retention Pillar is an area we did not have great success in starting a specific HTC initiative. However, we are able to connect the Community Foundation and Wealth Retention to the development of programs in the other pillars, especially the Youth Chamber.

Survey 10

Question #1. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that successfully engaged members of your community.

Pillar Coordinators and/or committee members personally contacted (by email, phone, or face to face) key stakeholders to ensure they understood the importance of their participation. Most people who were personally contacted participated, unless they had other commitments or conflicts. Empowering committee members to help get the word out was very effective rather than depending on one person or a small group of people. However, having a coordinator in charge of keeping everything organized was important to cross communication and to ensuring that each task was performed timely.

As an example, Adele Bowden-Purlee, the Chamber President, was recruited to be the pillar coordinator for the Leadership committee. She was in charge of resurrecting the Leadership Lawrence County program to train and mobilize individuals who were interested in becoming more involved in the community. Because the Chamber Board agreed this task was important to the community and fit within their mission she was allowed to do this as part of her position. The result is that 2 years more than 30 individuals have attended this 9- month program preparing future graduates for future positions in our community as volunteers, candidates for elected office, or simply having more knowledgeable, civic minded individuals in our community.

Question #2. Please share with us what communication tools/approaches your Indiana-HTC group used for events, activities, or programs that did not succeed in engaging members of your community.

Generally speaking, we used the local newspaper, radio, and various e-mail lists (such as the Chamber listserv) to get the word out to the general public about events, activities, and programs. While we did have what we considered to be "good" community involvement, the number of people who came to our events was not high. What we learned is that people lead such busy lives that if they don't understand the importance of these meetings then they won't take the time to attend. Or, there may be a sense of apathy that if there is no direct link as to how the event or program benefits the individual they don't make time to get involved. Both personal contact and having a coordinator in charge seemed crucial to our success.

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Concentration: Organizational Communication
GPA: 3.82

B. S.   **Purdue University,** West Lafayette, IN
Awarded December 2005
Major: Management
Minor: Marketing, International Business & Economics

Relevant Coursework:
C580 Advanced Organizational Communication
C501 Applied Communication Research
J531 Public Relations for Nonprofits
C500 Advanced Communication
C530 Communication Criticism
V509 Administrative Ethics in the Public Sector
C526 Effective Media Strategies
C520 Advanced Public Communication
C528 Group Communication and Organizations

Teaching Experience:
Introduction to Public Speaking (R110)
Associate Faculty, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
Fall 2010-Present
- Develop syllabus for three credit hour course
- Responsible for all classroom instruction and grading
- Guide students of different ability levels to develop public speaking skills transferrable to future academic or employment success

Related Professional Experience:
Communications Manager
Office of Community and Rural Affairs, 2008-Present
- Responsible for all aspects of external communication, including facilitating media relations, managing distribution lists, and maintaining relationships with key agency stakeholders.

- Responsible for all aspects of internal communication, including preparation of agency strategic plan and budget documents as well as distributing information to staff, state agencies, and state legislature.
- Serves as agency spokesperson.
- Develops web content and serves as agency webmaster.

Marketing Assistant
City of Lafayette, 2006-2008
- Created various promotional materials and other informational literature for park programs and initiatives using Microsoft and Adobe software.
- Coordinated media relations for the Parks Department including sending press releases and writing public service announcements, coordinating television and radio appearances, and organizing media-sponsored events.
- Assisted in planning, implementation, and analysis of marketing campaigns for a variety of departmental needs.

Conference Presentations:
Bell, A.E. (2011). Persuasion in Government Organizations. Information presented as part of a competitively selected panel, "Politically Speaking", at IUPUI Communication Week, Indianapolis, IN, March.

Memberships:
National Communication Association
Central States Communication Association

University Service & Campus Engagement:
Judge, IUPUI Spring Speech Night Finals, 2011
Critic, IUPUI Spring Speech Night, Preliminary Round, 2011

Related Certifications:
Certificate, 2010
Simplex Creative Problem Solving, Basadur Applied Creativity
Level 1 and Level 2

Certificate, 2010
Improving Quality of Life: Using Comprehensive Community Development to Build Community Training Course

Certificate, 2009
Indiana Community Development Course

Certificate, 2009
Indiana Economic Development Course (Accredited by the International Economic Development Council)