

Involving Communities in Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates the power of the Value Management (VM) methodology to facilitate collaborative decision making between communities and government by drawing on a number of case studies involving local councils in Tasmania.

Glamorgan Spring Bay:

A strategic plan driven by the community was required by Glamorgan Spring Bay Council. The council was seeking a consultative process that would unify the community, inspire Council and provide the basis for the region to achieve its potential.

Sorrell Causeway Bridge:

Replacement of the Sorrell Causeway Bridge involved a number of social and environmental issues. The proposed alignment impacted on heritage listed buildings, the breeding ground of a threatened species of sea star and a nursery for sharks.

Rooke Mall – Devonport City:

The Council and the community were divided on the form the revamped Rooke Mall should take. Using VM it was agreed the Mall should be pedestrian only with the capacity to be a shared mall in the future, if required.

George Town Memorial Hall Redevelopment:

The George Town Council wanted to involve the community in the redevelopment of the Memorial Hall complex and immediate precinct at Regent Square and choose to use the Value Management methodology.

Brighton 2040:

Brighton Council identified the need to involve the community in developing a vision for the future of the municipality. They choose to hold a Futures Workshop using Value Management methodology.

KEYWORDS: Value Management, Community Consultation, Decision Making, Local Government

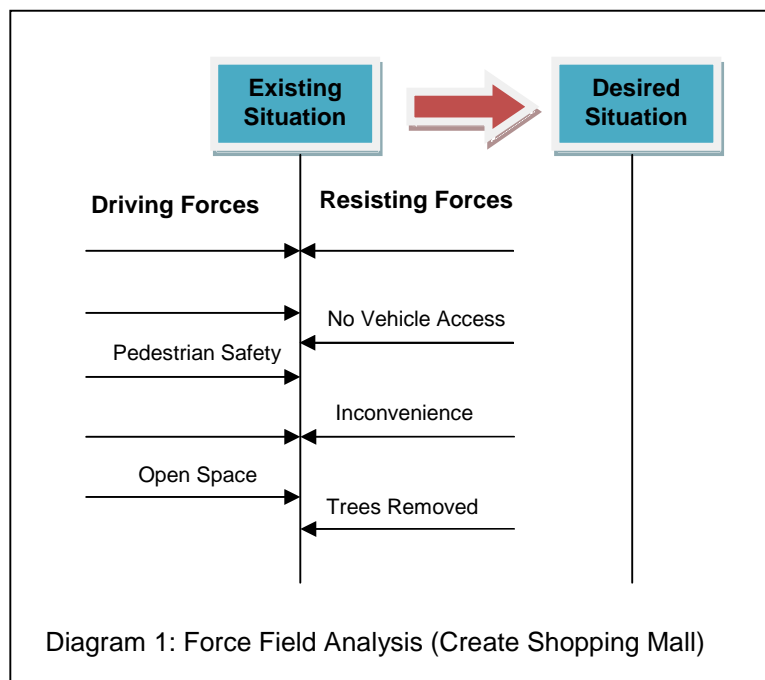
1. INTRODUCTION

“Cities in Transition” forms the prime focus of this conference which principally relates to the planning and development of Cities, Town Centres & Communities.

Most new developments involving Cities and their communities inevitably create some form of opposition, sometimes minor, but in controversial situations mindsets can harden and opposition can become exceptionally strong. Psychologists tell us – it is a natural human response to oppose change, particularly when we perceive a negative impact from the change.

Force Field analysis (Diagram 1) clearly demonstrates this dynamic – regardless of the strength of arguments supporting the need for change, the harder you push for change the stronger the resistive forces are likely to become. Therefore to implement change and to move to a new situation it is much more profitable to work towards lessening the resisting /opposing forces than to increase the strength of the driving forces. Force Field analysis assists in identifying the nature of both the driving and resisting forces.

The Value Management (VM) process works on reducing resistive forces and assists in gaining acceptance of projects by identifying and creatively working on ways to improve the acceptance of the project jointly with the community through a transparent and formal workshop process involving all key interest groups who work together to identify and validate all the drivers (needs) for change together with related concerns and issues that need to be resolved.



VM is a decision making process that has a wide range of applications. The analysis of functions to be provided (function analysis) and the relation to delivered value is what makes VM stand out from other decision making processes. As to results, the process has consistently achieved high levels of cost savings in both capital and recurrent terms.

The Value Management approach is used around the world with Institutes of Value Management in Britain, Canada, Italy, France, Japan, the United States and Hong Kong to mention a few.

Value Management is covered by the Australian Standard, Value Management AS 4183.

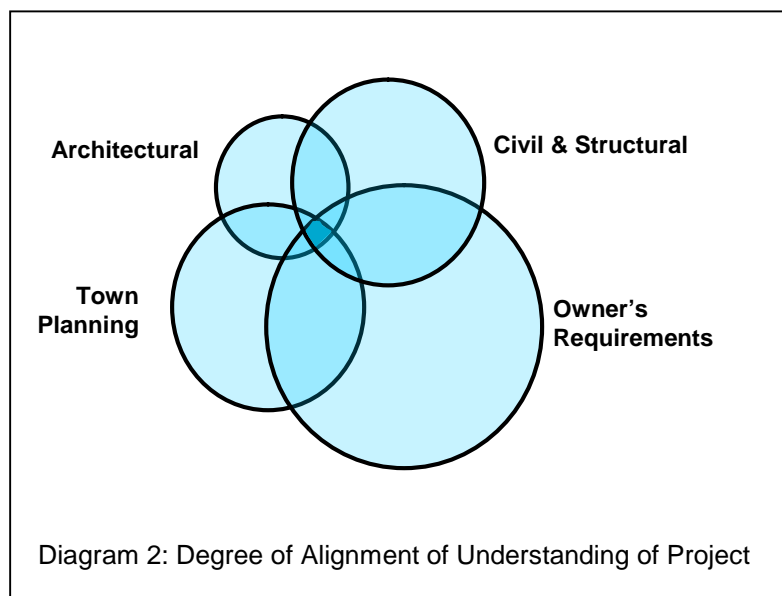
The community involvement process is an adaption of Value Management and has been tailored for use in development and testing of concepts with large groups of people who would be potentially impacted by a project. If the process has rigour and is transparent then trust can be developed with the community who through their involvement gain a sense of ownership resulting in better support for the project.

Alignment of Participants

Creating alignment of understanding between different groups and or individuals is an important ingredient in achieving agreement. Different words mean different things to different people. This is easy to understand where different cultures and languages are involved but it is equally important when dealing with different work groups within a single culture. Engineers see things differently from Town Planners, Architects see things differently from builders. Electrical engineers see things differently from structural engineers etc.

A conceptual diagram showing the potential degree of misalignment is depicted in Diagram 2.

VM works to increase the degree of overlap between parties thereby increasing the zone of common understanding (represented by the deepest blue area) where all circles coincide.



The formal workshop process provides the opportunity for all parties to explore all aspects of a project in “real time” ensuring that all parties understand issues equally from each other’s points of view. To ensure that the plan is followed an experienced and independent facilitator is essential to the validity and transparency of the process.

2. THE VALUE MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

Value Management has been described as a structured facilitated process in which decision makers, stakeholders, technical specialists and others work collaboratively to bring about value based outcomes in systems, processes, products and projects. It is a systematic and analytical process that seeks to achieve value for money by providing all the necessary functions at the lowest total cost consistent with required levels of quality and performance.

2.1. Value Management Study

Value Management Studies are centred upon a participatory workshop involving a multi-disciplinary, representative group of people working together to seek the outcome which represents best value or best value for money for a particular situation.

There are five essential elements of Value Management Studies. They are a prescribed Work Plan for the Value Management Study; an appropriate mix and commitment of group members; management of Value Management Study; senior *management* commitment and support; and effective facilitation

2.2. Stages and Activities of a Value Management Study

2.2.1. Pre-workshop Planning

The Value Management brief is prepared and review; Study group members are selected; a venue is organised; relevant information is gathered and distributed; the facilitation strategy and agenda is prepared; and Study group members are briefed.

2.2.2. The Workshop

The Study scope and objectives are confirmed; knowledge and understanding of the project and its context, including the attributes of value and value for money to be analysed is built; criteria for success are established; ideas are generated and evaluated; options and proposals are developed; recommendation and, where appropriate, decisions are agreed; and an action plan is prepared.

2.2.3. Post workshop

Debrief with the client, prepare and deliver the Study report

2.2.4. Post Study

Implement the Study recommendations

2.3. What is Value?

In the context of a Value Management Study, value is defined as an attribute of an entity determined by the perceived usefulness, benefit and importance of the entity.

Value for money, or resources used, is a comparative measure among alternatives of the relationship between value and the associated total costs or resources used.ⁱ

2.4. Function Analysis

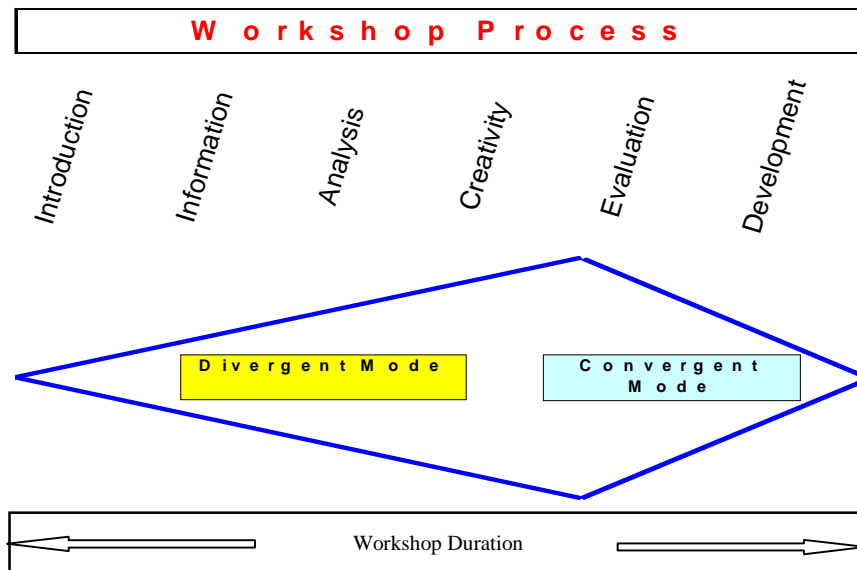
A key differentiator of Value Management from other problem solving processes is function analysis. This involves describing what the “project” does now using an active verb and a measurable noun.

Functions are very important to understand as they explain “why” an item exists and they are something that can easily be agreed by all parties with little argument! Function Analysis is a structured process that identifies and analyses functions, their interrelationships and, where appropriate, total costs or resources usedⁱⁱ.

Identifying functions provides a precise and concise understanding of the project, service or process under consideration and is a very effective tool in aiding communication.

2.5. The Workshop Process

The figure below shows the five major phases (Information, Analysis, Creativity, Evaluation and Development) of a workshop.



2.5.1. Information and Analysis Phases

Participants explore the current environment the project operates within; differentiate facts from opinions; identify what the project currently does, including wanted and unwanted functions; and identify issues associated with the project.

Key issues and essential functions that the project must deliver are identified. Key stakeholders may also be identified at this time.

The Information and Analysis phases of the workshop give participants an opportunity to share knowledge and build on their understanding of the project, the issues confronting the project and essential requirements to ensure a successful outcome.

2.5.2. Creativity and Evaluation Phases

Individually participants generate ideas to eliminate unwanted functions, deliver essential functions and deal with the key issues that had been identified. These ideas are then evaluated in a plenary session.

2.5.3. Development Phase

Working in small groups, participants use the ideas generated in the creativity phase to develop strategies and action plans to enhance the project.

The small group work is then evaluated by all the workshop participants in plenary. The positive aspects of the proposals are noted, as are any concerns, dangers or potential pitfalls and any ideas to address the concerns.

3. CASE STUDIES

3.1. Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council Strategic Plan

The Council had no viable strategic or operational plan. In a period of four months, the new general manager was required to produce a community driven strategic plan, meeting statutory requirements, starting from scratch. Further, a strong linkage with the State government's strategic planning process, Tasmania Together, was sought.

A process was required to unify the community, inspire Council and provide the basis for a region to rise to its potential. The Council opted to use Value Management.

One hundred community people, most targeted by personal invitation and others responding to public notices assembled in short order to meet with Council and State government representatives.

Led by three experienced Value Management facilitators, this group of high school pupils, farmers, business leaders, environmentalists, retirees, professionals and ordinary folk were guided over three days by a Value Management Study that achieved the seemingly impossible – broad and deep agreement on normally divisive issues to produce data that formed the basis of a strategic plan. Value Management is a top-shelf tool. The experience of those involved in the process of developing a strategic plan for the Council will attest to the fact that the quality tool selected was a perfect match to the job.

Outcomes of the workshop included a common view of the major issues facing the municipality; a shared understanding of the concerns of the ratepayers from the various areas in the municipality; agreement of the critical functions to be covered by the strategic plan; and agreed strategic priorities for the Municipality with a framework of actions.

3.2. Sorell Causeway Bridge Replacement

The State Road Authority had identified that the Sorrel Causeway Bridge had reached the end of its useful life and needed replacement. The bridge is located immediately adjacent to the residential area of Midway Point.

The bridge designers had identified three options, with their favoured option being a bridge on a new alignment north of the existing bridge.

There were also significant environmental issues that needed to be addressed. The Bridge is adjacent to the Midway Point residential area, the Ramsar site at Pittwater, a breeding ground for sharks, oyster farms and the habitat of endangered sea stars.

The State Road Authority decided to undertake a Value Management Study as a means of consulting with the community and other stakeholders to identify the preferred alignment and expectations for project. Participants included representatives from Local Councils, Service Authorities, Local Business, Consulting Engineers, Local Associations, the RACT, Government Departments, Midway Point Yacht Club, local residents and the Hobart International Airport.

Commenting on her experiences of the Value Management Study, including the two-day workshop, for the Replacement Bridge, the Mayor of Sorell Council, Carmel Torenus, said

that initially she had little faith in the consultation process and the two-day workshop, but after the Value Management workshop she stated she had been proven wrong. She said that the consultation process had been excellent and the Value Management Study and Workshops were invaluable and had achieved their aim to ensure that the views of all stakeholders were heard.

At the end of the process the group had agreed on a preferred option for the replacement bridge, on a new alignment south of the existing alignment, which had incorporated many of the issues raised in the submissions received from interested parties. They had identified essential functions to be provided by the new bridge structure and agreed key issues that needed to be dealt with.

In addition this project was completed (on a major tourist route to Port Arthur and the East Coast and immediately adjacent to Midway Point residential area) without any major adverse comments or complaints.

3.3. Devonport City – Rooke Mall

“New Horizons”, a structural and financial commitment by Devonport City Council to substantially enhance the heart and face of Devonport, was the most important initiative for the City in the past 10 years.

One of the main features of this project was the Rooke Mall re-development. Council decided to undertake a 2 day Value Management Study to agree on a concept for redevelopment of the Mall.

The Council and the community were divided on the form the revamped Rooke Mall should take. Some were in favour of opening up the Mall to through traffic, others favouring a pedestrian only Mall and a further group favouring a shared Mall (i.e., pedestrians and traffic with pedestrians having right of way). Council opted for a Value Management Study.

Invited participants included representatives from the general public, Rooke Street traders and property owners, Fourways traders, South Rooke Street retailers, Stewart Street retailers, other local businesses, the Devonport Chamber of Commerce and Industry, elected members of Council, Council staff, youth representatives, Tasmania Police, the Devonport Community and Health Services Centre and Devonport Commercial Promotions.

Critical issues, key functions for the Mall and key stakeholders were identified.

The outcome of the Value Management Study was agreement that the Mall should be pedestrian only with construction to facilitate a shared vehicle access in the future, if became apparent that this was appropriate.

It was identified that the primary focus for the Mall was generating people interaction; that the Mall must be a vibrant, interactive People's place; and that the Mall needs to be opened up to provide clear lines of vision/open space (as a consequence, a number of significant trees were identified for removal). In addition, it was agreed that the existing clock, the information booth and the stage in the Mall should be removed, all of which had been thought to be of importance to the City.

3.4. George Town Memorial Hall

The George Town Council had agreed that it would proceed with the redevelopment of the Memorial Hall complex and immediate precinct at Regent Square and consider integration of recreation uses at the existing community centre building located at Friend Street, George Town into the new complex.

The Council felt it was important to involve community representatives in developing this concept and decided to use the Value Management methodology.

The council through one-on-one consultation with a number of stakeholders in the community formed the opinion that there was support for redevelopment of the Memorial Hall to include an international standard sports arena.

Again key issues and functions were identified, which facilitated the group in agreeing the workshop outcomes

At the workshop it became clear that the community favoured a redevelopment that focused on cultural and recreational use with a secondary focus on sporting activities.

Major agreements and outcomes were:

- The participants agreed to the concept presented for the gardens and surrounds of the Memorial Hall, including ideas for an iconic entrance.
- Issues and proposals relating to a multi-purpose centre at the Memorial Hall were explored in detail and essential functions for the redeveloped hall were agreed.
- A proposal for staged implementation of the redevelopment was presented and endorsed.

3.5. Brighton 2040

Brighton Council identified the need to involve the community in developing a vision for the future of the municipality. They choose to hold a Futures Workshop undertaken within the umbrella of the Value Management methodology.

Participants included representatives from the local high school, community groups, elected members and staff of the Council, the business sector and state government agencies.

Key issues facing the municipality and emerging themes from the workshop were identified. Key elements of the preferred future were identified, which lead to 8 key focus areas and 10 strategies to deliver the outcomes of the key focus areas.

Key issues identified and agreed included access to knowledge, education and training; the lack of entertainment and recreational options – particularly for the youth; the need for a CBD; the lack of services – particularly transport, which impacts education and job opportunities; and the need for improved communications at all levels

The key focus areas were:

- Promote Brighton as a great place to be.
- Improve education and training opportunities.

- Promote industrial and business growth.
- Maintain and improve the physical infrastructure of the region.
- Improve communications and interaction between residents, community groups and businesses.
- Improve land use planning
- Ensure provision of improved transport systems
- Form alliances to take projects and strategies forward

Ten strategies were developed.

- Establish an industry/business group to lobby on issues relevant to Brighton
- Develop a sporting complex that included a centre for holding functions with a capacity of approximately 300 people. The centre can also be used for gymnastics, aerobics and presentations.
- Develop a land use and development strategy
- A recreation and socialisation strategy to involve parents through children.
- Provide a facility for training and skill development focused on target industries.
- Develop formal alliances with adjacent Councils and businesses and expand the existing State Government alliance through the partnership agreement process.
- A communications strategy to raise community awareness to promote a cohesive community and to coordinate a strategic approach to media marketing and public relations.
- Develop a Central Business District.
- Develop a bike network that circulates and links to the Central Business District, the foreshores, entertainment facilities, clubs, Police and Citizens Youth Council services, schools and also links with the Glenorchy track.
- A strategy to change parents' attitude towards the importance of children's education.

4. CONCLUSION

Using the Value Management methodology, a wide range of stakeholders were able to work together to collaboratively explore and gain a shared understanding of the environment their project operated within, the facts surrounding the project, their assumptions and the issues confronting the project. Using this as a base, participants were then able to generate and evaluate ideas, and validate concepts, options and solutions to a diverse range of projects.

REFERENCES

ⁱ Australian Value Management Standard AS4183-2007

ⁱⁱ Australian Value Management Standard AS4183-2007