GETTING TO ACTION:
How to put citizen ownership behind great community plans

MICHAEL W-P FORTUNATO
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR RURAL STUDIES
Holistic Scholarship

- Teaching
- Research
- Outreach
Center

Fund, Plan, and Manage

Connect, Educate, and Learn

Idea!
WHAT DO WE DO?
• **FOOD**
  - Growth in demand
  - New product segments
  - Demand for local/organic
  - Global luxury

• **ENERGY**
  - Global growth 1.5% per year (EIA 2013)
  - Diversification
  - Low environmental impact

• **WATER**
  - Drought risk
  - New irrigation/ag techniques
  - Clean water technology
What is innovation?

- Can be based on citizen or formal expertise
- Intersection of different points of view
- Conversation between “experts” and citizens
- Must focus on what the community controls
Experts  Citizens
Capturing Outliers
TEN STEPS TO ACTION
Fortunato's Brain

Ursus arctos horribilis
1) Create Networks
2) Diversify

Bridge Structural Holes
3) Create a Safe Space
4) Create Purpose

Identify Common Purpose
5) Get SMART

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
 Relevant
Time-bound
6) Goal Hierarchy

Paint a Fence
7) Learn Your ABC’s

- **B** – Belonging: “Let’s Work Together” in a downtown group

- **C** – Competence: “Let’s Try New Things” and create a local space for innovation

- **A** – Autonomy: Freedom to pursue individual interests, not dictated by broader group. Direct competition welcome
8) Celebrate Success!
9) Learn From Failure
10) Repeat
SEVEN VIRTUES OF ACTION-ORIENTED PRACTICE
Who is in charge of community development?
POWER OF A THIRD PARTY
BE HUMAN
MAKE IT FUN
WORK WITH WHAT WORKS
Thinking is easy, and it’s inexpensive, so
THINK BIG
LEAD

(don't lag)
Solving local problems with local talent = EMPOWERMENT
IT CAN BE DONE
10 Steps

• Network
• Diversify
• Create a Safe Space
• Build Purpose
• Goal Hierarchy
• Know Your ABC’s
• Celebrate
• Learn from Failure
• Repeat

7 Virtues

• Community Ownership
• Third Party
• Be Human
• Make It Fun
• Work With What Works
• Think Big
• Lead Don’t Lag
RURAL AREAS IN THE FUTURE
RURAL AREAS ARE THE FUTURE
Thank You

How can the Center for Rural Studies help my community or region?

Dr. Michael W-P Fortunato
Director, Center for Rural Studies
fortunato@shsu.edu
(412) 480.4974