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If You're Not at the Table, You Are on the Menu

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Agenda

- ▶ Overview
- ▶ Why is engagement important?
- ▶ Who should be engaged in the CEDS process?
- ▶ How do you engage a diverse group?
- ▶ Implementation

What are CEDS?

- ▶ Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
- ▶ Strategy-driven plan for regional economic development.
- ▶ Regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide economic growth and resiliency of a region.
- ▶ Simply put, it is a roadmap.

What makes a successful CEDS?

- ▶ Understanding what your region's strengths and weaknesses are, and how you can drive towards growth.
 - ▶ Identifies your region's competitive advantages.
- ▶ Putting together a plan with buy-in from partners.
 - ▶ Tells a compelling story
- ▶ A plan that others want to implement.
 - ▶ Motivates others to act.
- ▶ Collective impact, ensuring that the EDD is not the only one responsible for implementing the plan.
 - ▶ Commits to measurable success.

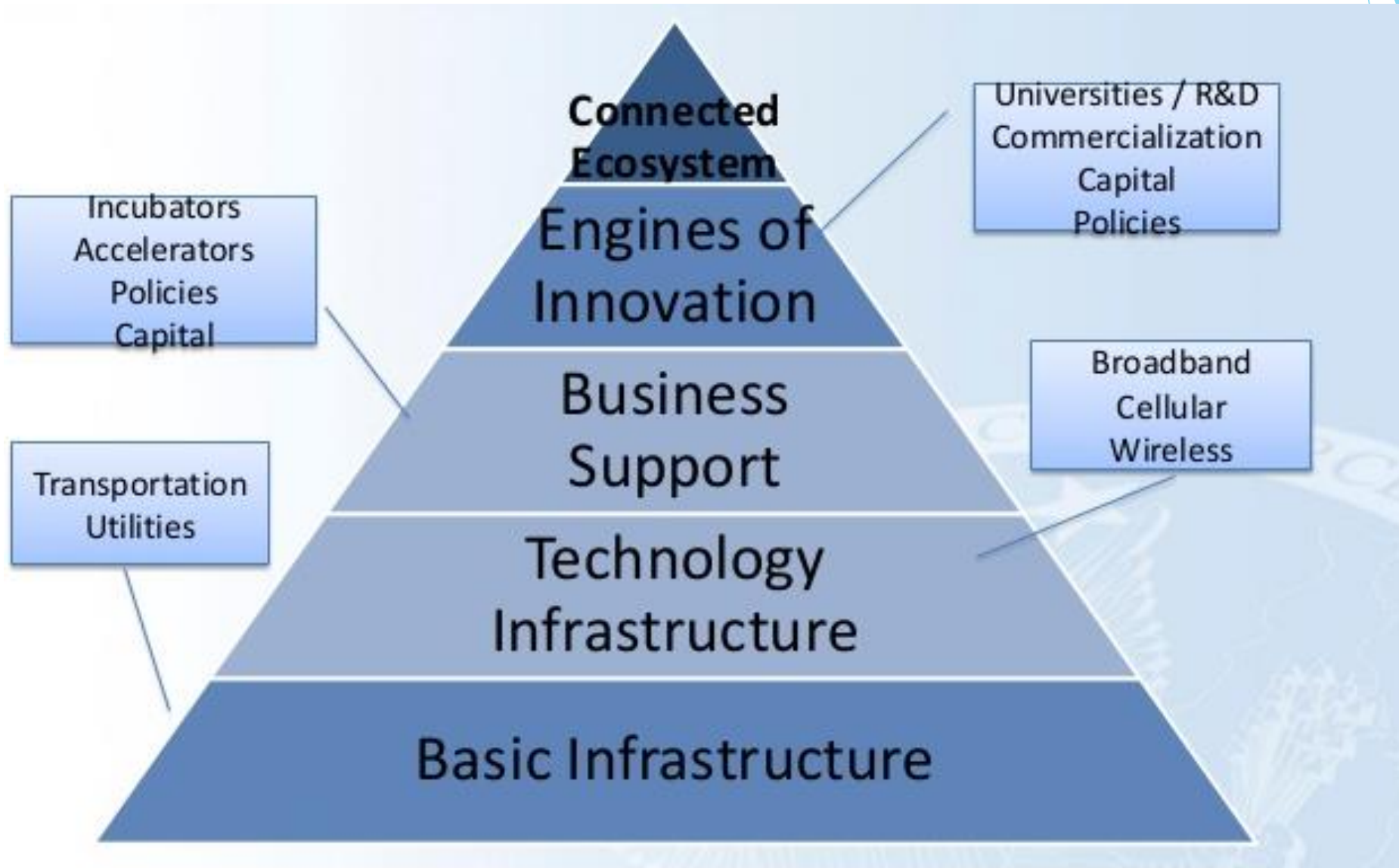
Why is engagement important?

- ▶ Who you have at the table highlights the areas of focus for your region.
- ▶ Without the right people, you do not have a complete picture.
- ▶ Drive growth regionally, not just locally.

Who should be at the table?

- ▶ Private sector
- ▶ Local government
- ▶ Economic development leaders
- ▶ Workforce development partners
- ▶ Philanthropy (when possible)

Hierarchy of Needs



Culture and People Matter

- ▶ Culture is the glue that brings communities together and ensures economic opportunity
- ▶ Critical elements of culture include:
 - ▶ Openness
 - ▶ Diversity
 - ▶ Trust
 - ▶ Mentors/role models
 - ▶ Feedback
 - ▶ Innovation

Without **PEOPLE**, none of this works!

Building an Ecosystem

ECOSYSTEM

Talent

- Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners
- Workforce
- Mentors
- Pipeline

Innovation

- Community Colleges and Universities
- Private Industry R&D
- Individuals

Support

- Technology and Facilities
- Programs and Services
- Policies
- Mentoring

Capital

- Loans
- Grants
- Investors
- Customers

Engaging Local Elected Officials

- ▶ This process requires making difficult trade-offs
 - ▶ Choosing what not to do is often more important than what to do
- ▶ You have to establish a *UNIQUE* position
 - ▶ What makes you unique in a global environment?
- ▶ Cannot be done without local leadership

Common Mistakes

- ▶ Avoid making difficult decisions
- ▶ Try to be everyone's friend
- ▶ Rely on consultants instead of your stakeholders
- ▶ Think only locally, not regionally
- ▶ Not getting buy-in on implementation
- ▶ Only meet once a year, or worse, once every few

Outreach/Engagement/Promotion

- ▶ Remember, this is NOT your plan
- ▶ Regional assets and resources include PARTNERS
- ▶ Regions must grow together, not leave one another behind
- ▶ Think outside the box
- ▶ Private, public and non-profit partners
- ▶ Don't just meet around the plan
- ▶ Create a stakeholder group that meets regularly

Outreach/Engagement/Promotion

- ▶ Tell your story
- ▶ Make a clear call to action
- ▶ Coalitions have not only the right, but the responsibility to tell a community's story
- ▶ Each individual story should reinforce one overarching theme

**STORY + DATA + CALL TO ACTION =
IMPACT**

Tell Your Story

- ▶ Clear and concise
- ▶ Emotion
- ▶ Meaning
- ▶ Communicate an experience of who you are
- ▶ All individual stories should reinforce one consistent larger narrative

Engage, inform, persuade,
motivate or inspire.

South Central Economic Development District (SCEDD) - Nebraska

- ▶ The South Central Economic Development District (SCEDD) designed a needs assessment tool to assist communities in creating and implementing community plans.
- ▶ This tool allows communities to access up-to-date information on their demographics, community services, infrastructure and facilities, economic development, housing, education, and social service needs.
- ▶ SCEDD has completed 10 needs assessments in the past five years, resulting in more than \$5 million in community projects that were approved by local governments.
- ▶ These assessments have been vital to the rural communities that SCEDD serves by assessing their current needs and opportunities and providing concrete data to encourage community engagement and action.

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