



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

AND IT'S ROLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

This space in the i.e. Magazine has been dedicated to many different marketing topics over the past several years. From the basics of marketing to the lessons from the 2016 Presidential campaign, we'd like to think we've covered the A-Z in event marketing... and then some.

We're planning to take the next few editions to explore a new topic that has been on the minds of many in the cities and communities in which we work: Creative Placemaking. Over coming installments, we will introduce you to some new concepts, terminology and other tools on how to look at creative placemaking as a way to connect your events and festivals into the overall plans for the development and growth of your town, city or region.

If you haven't connected the dots between creative placemaking and the work you do, now's your chance to develop your role as a creative placemaker in your community and we're hoping this series of articles helps you.

A Bit of History

The first time I heard the phrase "creative placemaking" was in a 2014 meeting of the arts and culture leadership in the city of Allentown, PA where we discussed how the arts would play a role in the \$1 Billion development of the downtown region of Pennsylvania's third largest city. Convened by the lead developer in the city's renaissance, the President and CEO of the Allentown Art Museum presented ideas from across the country and how arts and culture plays an integral role in determining any city's quality of life.

That spark ignited a string of conversations and meetings on how to build a plan for the city's engagement with arts and culture. Along the way we've taken steps forward and back and experienced breakthroughs and breakdowns common to many communities striving to create a

new future for their residents and guests.

The phase "creative placemaking" originated from Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, authors of a white paper commissioned by the Mayor's Institute on City Design entitled *Creative Placemaking*. Filing under the "small world" category, Anne Nicodemus is now a colleague on a regional cultural project we are exploring in the Lehigh Valley region of Eastern PA.

By definition, creative placemaking is the field of practice that intentionally leverages the power of arts, culture and creativity to serve a community's interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place.

There is a lot to unpack within a single statement. It may be best for our purposes to understand creative placemaking as the all-encompassing phrase that allows us to define the efforts behind the work we do when hosting multi-day festivals or small neighborhood events and how that plays a role along with the physical and natural features of our city, town or region.

Arts, culture and creativity are inherently woven together and provide the sense of place where individual artists and arts institutions come together with architecture, media, marketing and other industries to define the economic sector known as the creative economy. There's not a mayor or member of city council that does not want to appeal to this market segment. It represents the new, fresh, entrepreneurial spirit that brings new talent, energy and excitement to the community where new jobs, companies and restaurants follow in short order.

With creative placemaking, we take a step toward defining the work of the talented artists and administrators that bring this work to life and infuse it into the everyday rhythm of our cities.

And finally, what neighborhood, city or region does not have an agenda based on "change, growth and transformation?"

Even the most successful cities are dedicated to revitalization and renaissance of their communities, if only to continue to lead the way and set trends to incorporate the arts into the fabric of their economic development plans.

Why is Creative Placemaking So Important at this Point?

Relatively new as a concept since 2010, creative placemaking has captured the attention of city managers and planners as well as philanthropists and others working in the urban and regional planning space.

Event and festival producers spend a great deal of the work in the trenches on the day to day. But we all know there are opportunities where we need to present our events at a higher level – whether for funding, resources or overall support. Creative placemaking allows you to raise the level of your conversations and begin to build consensus around the work you do and to provide long-term measurable outcomes which everyone understands as the eventual goal of the festivals and events we host.

City and regional planners and private developers are focused on the future of our cities and tapping into trends that will impact the communities in which they work. Creative placemaking has captured a place in the lexicon of these influential leaders in our communities and it is a great time for those engaged with arts, culture, festivals and events to begin to learn and practice the same vernacular and terminology used in these circles.

Funding plays a role in this creative placemaking space as well. Local, regional and national foundations are seeking investments in communities that impact real results and deliver on the basic quality of life improvements for all socio-economic levels. Much of the work we do in the events and festivals realm touches all residents in our neighborhoods and communities. While

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those who deal in the municipal world may have challenges tapping into foundation resources, activities surrounding creative placemaking are excellent opportunities to create public-private partnerships to help fund events for the benefit of the residents and guests of our cities.

In Summary

Creative placemaking allows us to begin to define the impact our activities have on the residents, employees and guests that make up the social fabric of our communities. Once that impact is measurable, we can have conversations

with the leadership of our communities on why substantial support is needed on an ongoing basis to support the arts and culture events we are tasked with producing which will result in further economic development in our downtowns or other areas of redevelopment.

We hope this brief introduction to creative placemaking has whet your appetite to learn more about the basics of the concept and how you might be able to translate your work and that of your colleagues into a new space to re-energize and reimagine the tasks you tackle everyday.

Watch this space for more ideas and ways to connect creative placemaking to the plans for your city!

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