



Community Relations and Outsourcing – A Marriage of Convenience

Introduction

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This is where we discuss objectivity...



Why give up the “single” life?



Financial – you can save quite a bit of money outsourcing the “grunt work”.

Organizational / Work load – a centralized outsource point can work across multiple products.

Staffing flexibility – easier to add and subtract staff through a vendor than to ramp up / lay-off internally

The Dating Game



Find the right vendor for your specific needs:

Play the field – ask around, shop around, find options. Even companies that aren't a perfect fit can provide valuable comparison points.

Ask the right questions – make sure you are covering all your bases. Go back and ask ones you think of later, if necessary.

Marriage



- The contract is your pre-nuptial agreement – Cover all your bases, because if it's not in there, it could be a problem down the road.
- Make sure the in-laws (legal / finance / executives) are involved and happy – consensus is vital to starting a good relationship.
- Be flexible about the ceremony (start-up) – set the schedule well ahead of time, but prepare to adjust to last-minute glitches and hitches.
- The details – before you get cold feet, make sure you understand your vendor's internal policies and that the vendor understands yours. Training is vital for outsourced staff to understand your priorities.

Married Life



The Honeymoon – the beginning of the relationship is where you fine-tune reporting and communication processes. Learn how to talk to each other.

Honey, I crashed the car – defining how bad news is conveyed and crises are handled can make or break the relationship.

Marriage Counseling – define and implement conflict resolution practices. Don't just throw the china.

Endings



Divorce



“It’s not me, it’s you..” – it’s important to set expectations up front of the consequences of poor performance.

No-Fault Divorce – sometimes happens for reasons unrelated to performance. Financial, structural, etc.

Calling it quits– clearly communicate why the relationship is ending.

Dividing things up – regardless of reason, transition planning and details have to be worked out. Responsibilities and security issues are two important considerations.

Alternate Ending



They Lived Happily Ever After....



Anniversary celebrations – contracts and agreements should be evaluated annually.

Domestic bliss – project staff should be reviewed regularly, especially home-based contractors.

The kids are all grown up - Low-level moderators today are the Community Managers of tomorrow.

Questions?



...if I know the answer, it'll be a miracle.

The End? Inconceivable!



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