



5 WAYS

TO

CREATE THE

EXCEPTIONAL

# A NOTE

Chris Fields (Rynic) uses a very visual presentation. This “notes” version of presentation has been distilled to focus on key messages.

**What if we could achieve  
the exceptional as  
community-builders?**

# OUR FUTURE, OUR CHOICE

Tread water or strive  
Average or exceptional  
Dot on a map or memorable  
Inside or outside  
Care or don't care  
Engage or disconnect in community-building  
Happy or unhappy  
Be here or be somewhere else

*Proud? A legacy?*  
*Prosperous?*





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# PROBLEM

- Society is stressed and anxious – which is a set point for interaction with government.
- Research says our attention spans are shrinking.
- We are disengaged with government – small numbers vote in municipal elections....we don't advise our kids to work for government as a career option, statistically politicians are low on professions-of-trust rankings, small numbers on edges of opinion (vs pragmatic middle of bell curve) are shrinking our ability to be ambitious, our societal set point doesn't appreciate people who work in government, politics is too single issues and ward-based vs connecting dots community-wide.

# PROBLEM

The end result of our attitudinal challenges around governance is that our highest ambition tends to water down to lowest common denominator, which is average, plodding, and same as anywhere else. We can be just another black dot on the map in people's minds when our objective should be to make our communities a colourful dot on a map. Why? Because it's those who stand out from the crowd that will generate more pride (with all of its positive benefits), attract more investment, and attract more tourists = more successful.

**How do we reframe  
community-  
building?**





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## 1. Attitude is a Choice.

*Positive attitude, problem solving, compassionate inclusion, and purposeful existence are the easiest steps we can take. It's like a light switch...on or off. 80% of potential positive impact on ability to achieve the exceptional.*

## 2. Lizard Lips Float Ships

*neuroscience says we are emotion-based decision makers. If we link what we say and do to emotion, we open the door to transformative progress.*

## 3. Community Matters

*we have entered an era (footloose investment/labour) where quality of place is really important.*

## 4. Why Is Calling, Please Pick Up

*answer "Why" your community (and initiatives) matters and unlock the power of possibilities.*

## 5. Adrenalize Your Brand

*you must differentiate with both product and sales pitch to rise above the noise.*

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ATTITUDE  
IS A  
CHOICE





# ATTITUDE IS A CHOICE

- Research says happiness is a construct of pleasure, relationships (work, friends, family, hobbies) and meaning. It's meaning...PURPOSE and LEGACY...where people have lost connection with government...where we can re-connect at its most transformative level.
- We need to better appreciate the value of government as a quality basic services provider (water, sewer, roads, facilities).
- Taxes are “bad”, investment is “good.” For municipalities these two words are the same thing. We all “own” what we see....have a vested interest in its success.
- We need to look past much around us that panders to fear – the most primitive and emotional part of our brain hence the reason fear can be so gripping.
- Consensus is impossible – like a bell curve. We expend immense resources trying to achieve the impossible. We listen most to those at the extremes of the pragmatic, problem-solving focused societal bell curve. Leadership capacity is the bridge we need.
- We need to stop looking at the past as a saviour. We need to embrace change. Change is accelerating. Change is all about looking forward and realizing opportunity.
- We need to become far more adaptable to exponential change.
- Do small things that work toward bigger things.
- Have gratitude – we are lucky to live in Canada.

# ATTITUDE IS A CHOICE

- Worry less about your ideas or what others think...research says the biggest regret seniors have is they worried too much when they were younger.
- Dare to be different – our brain picks up on different not same.
- Pursue “Us” not just “I” – nature (e.g. geese in V formation) demonstrates the sum greater than the parts value of “Us.”
- See policy choices through the prism of future and change – millennial-and-younger desires, new innovation possibilities like forestry and housing, industry 4.0, the rise of the creative class/knowledge and services economy, nurturing of entrepreneurial culture, a small but growing reconnection to things rural (the “realness” of people and place).
- “Legacy” is a powerful word that motivates many to action they otherwise wouldn’t consider.

# **OUR LEGACY-MAKING QUESTIONS**

**Why will residents, visitors, and investors choose our community over other places in future, in the context of rapid change?**

**What has our community done to REALLY be ambitious vs tread water?**

**How have you personally contributed to inspirational community building?**





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LIZARD LIPS  
FLOAT  
SHIPS



# LIZARD LIPS FLOAT SHIPS

- Neuroscience research indicates 95% of all decisions we make are emotion-based. Government tends to communicate in reverse – using cognitive, fact-based arguments.
- The human eye is a 570 megapixel camera. We need to communicate on more visual terms. We need to use unique visuals not “same as.”
- Neuroscience research indicates our reaction to the five senses is exponential not linear. We need to speak the language of all of our senses.
- Research indicates we crave simplicity. When presented with many options, we purchase less not more. In marketing and communications we tend to do the reverse....over-present options vs present a focused value proposition.
- We are natural storytellers vs analytic-driven. We need to tell more stories about who we are and why we matter.

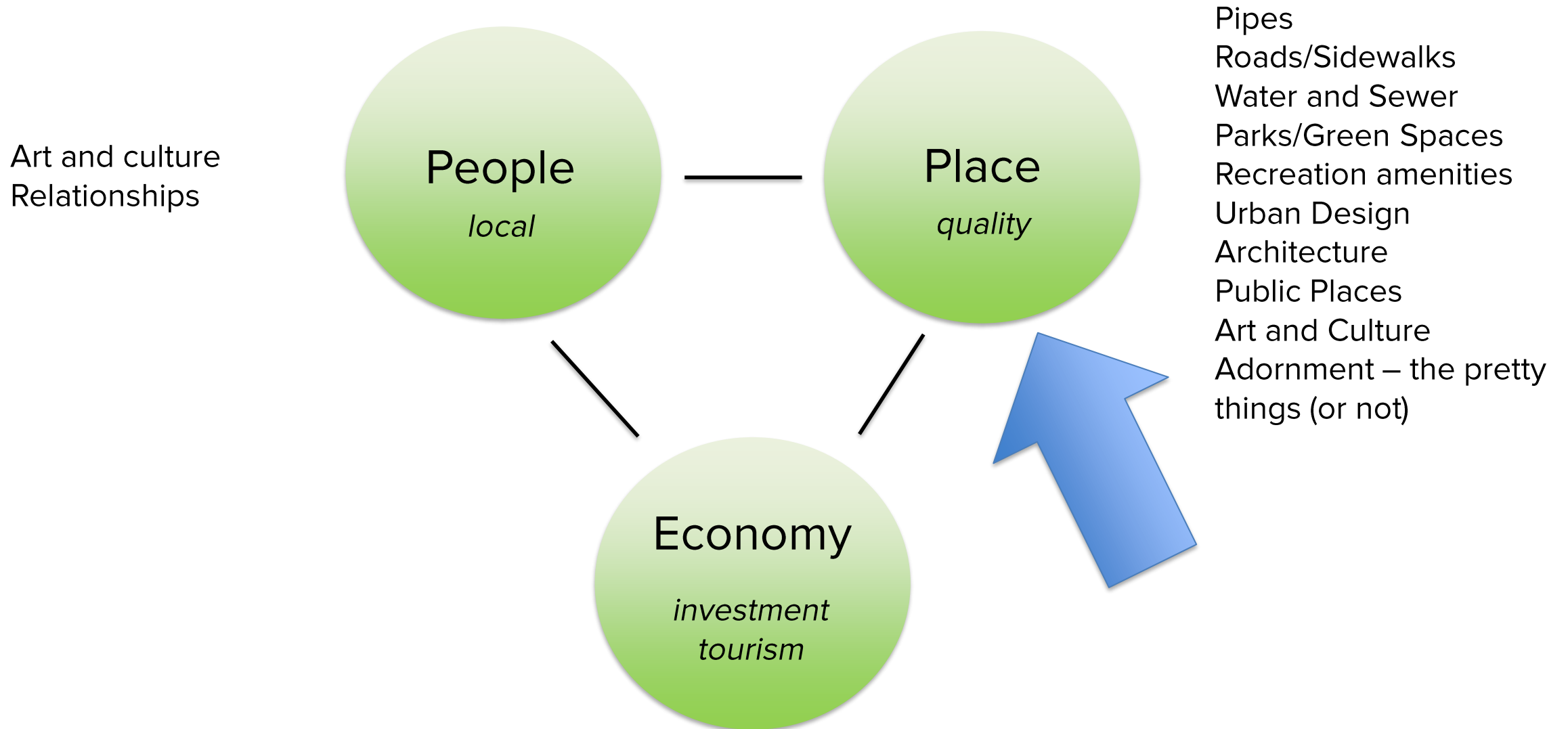
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# COMMUNITY MATTERS





# THE ESSENCE OF COMMUNITY



# COMMUNITY MATTERS

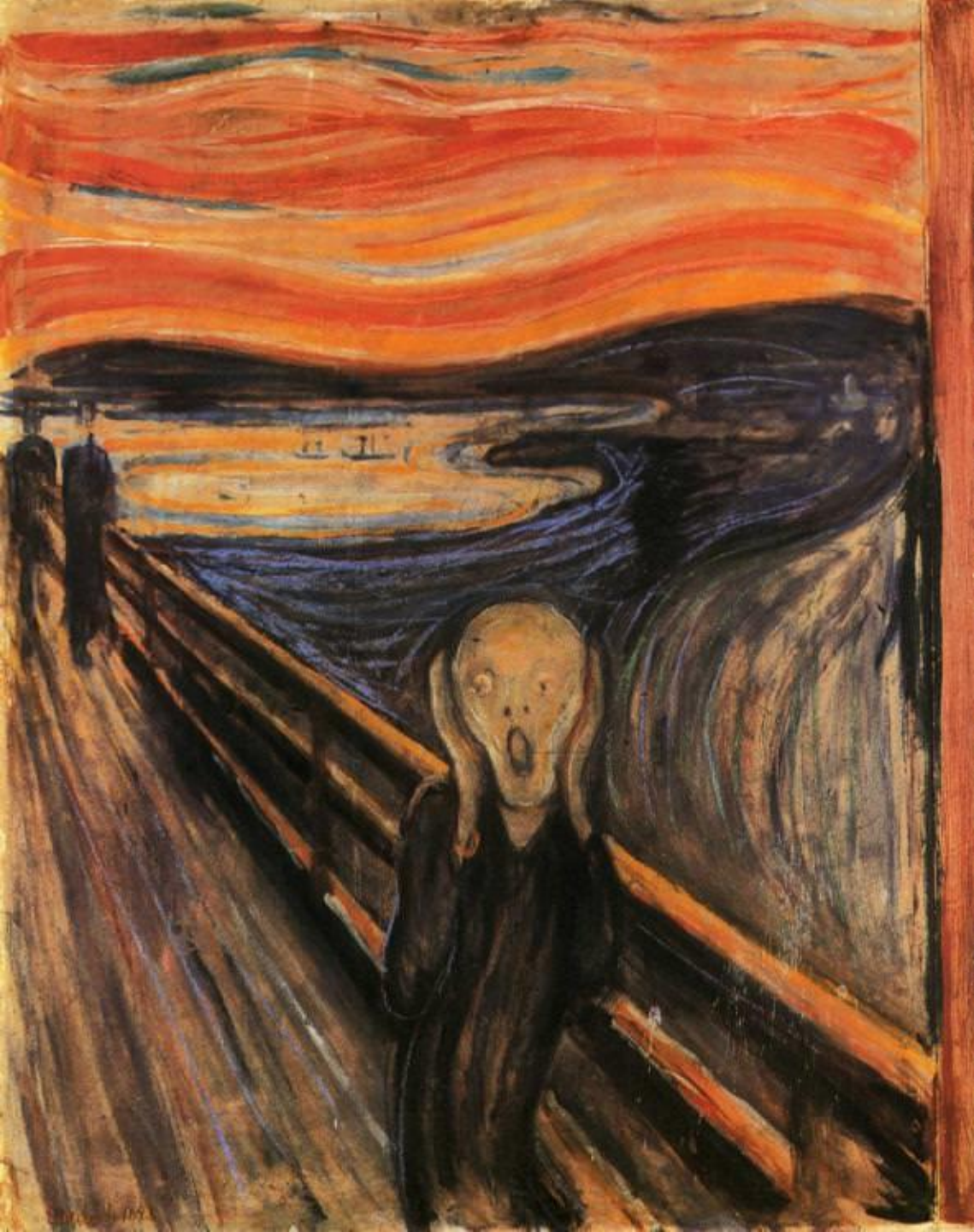
- Placemaking is rising in importance as we shift to a knowledge economy and a greater share of the workforce chooses where they live based on lifestyle and amenity. People increasingly “make their job” vs follow jobs around. People want to live in beautiful communities that have specific types of amenity they align with.
- Creating differentiating “whimsy and surprise” aligns with this dynamic. This doesn’t need to be expensive. It’s simply a prism of asking how any action in physical space can be made more beautiful/unique. Small things are cumulative when it comes to community pride, investment and tourist interest.

Change  
creates critics.

Imaginative  
change  
creates even  
more critics.







# The Creative Paradox

The more interesting  
it is, the more afraid  
we are to make it  
real in public places

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WHY IS  
CALLING,  
PLEASE  
PICK UP



The role of government is three-fold: 1) set a direction; 2) provide services people want; 3) provide those services at a price people are willing to pay. Answering our “why” is all about setting a direction...and it's governments' weakest link...with too many plans, plans that lack focused ambition, and plans that lack concrete ways to measure progress.

Note: government is good at it's “80%” – which is to provide quality basic services. The only challenge is it doesn't distinguish a Canadian community. The exceptional lies in the distinguishing 20%, which is where the power of plans lie.



# WHY do we matter?

(who are we?)

## WHAT

do you  
want to be  
known for?

**Expert Tip:**  
Answer these  
strategic questions  
and 80% of your  
pathway to  
achieving your  
highest ambition is  
defined.



# 80

*80% of investment is local (economic development research). It makes the power of vision/strategy more compelling....convince locals and they will row with you.*

5

ADRENALIZE  
YOUR BRAND



# ADRENALIZE YOUR BRAND

- Most communities are worried about standing out from the crowd. Marketing that does is often criticized – resulting in watered-down, average efforts that sounds the same as everywhere else. Using a cliché mountain, “discover us,” and calling it a day doesn’t work when we receive thousands of marketing messages a day and our brain notices different not same.
- “Same” is ineffective and a poor return on investment. The paradox is that More Bravery=Less Consensus. Communities Must Be Creatively Brave To Get Noticed.
- To stand out requires focus on differentiated value proposition (3-5), targeting to audiences attracted to specific value proposition, needle in a haystack imagery, personality of place (people and experience not geography), and storytelling. Creativity matters....



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