

CELEBRATE 2012 ToP CHAMPIONS

Mike Sable | Assistant City Manager, City of Brooklyn Park

Mike Sable, Assistant City Manager, City of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, experienced ToP Facilitation process during his time with the City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Numerous facilitated conversations were held across the City in response to a disaster where over 3,000 homes and businesses were destroyed. The task of 60 Cedar Rapids city staff trained in ToP Facilitation Methods was to engage the community in rebuilding the neighborhoods.

When Mike first heard of an engagement idea in his new position with the City of Brooklyn Park in 2010, he immediately thought of contacting the Technology of Participation group in Minnesota. As the City of Brooklyn Park was preparing to shift from a traditional departmental structure to “goal oriented” teams, employee engagement became a priority. Mike took on a challenge to “transform” the organizational culture. He has been the true champion of change, engagement and participation. Mike’s courage and perseverance turned what seemed impossible at the time into a new normal. Many in the organization and the community have benefited from Mike’s leadership and support in bringing the new way of doing business into the reality. Training activities and participatory events allowed for emerging talents to step forward and take a lead on projects and initiatives within and outside the City hall.



Brooklyn Park Liaisons’ Planning Session

“Thanks to Mike Sable’s leadership, forward-thinking implementation, and inspiration to city staff of being trained in the ToP facilitation methods, the City of Brooklyn Park has transformed from being a traditional municipal government entity to innovators of a higher performing and learning organization that allows staff at any level of government to draw upon their strengths, talent, and skills to engage in visioning, planning, and problem solving that is inclusive to all existing perspectives and cultures.”

- Elizabeth Tolzmann

Organization

Today Brooklyn Park has higher expectations of the city employees not only to be involved in their respective jobs and departments, but continue on the path of building learning organization. Changing the culture isn’t easy, it was not an exception in Brooklyn Park. It took at least 18 months before people really could see the value in facilitation. Excitement kept building as more and more people saw the determination from the Administration Office and the deliberate actions taken to encourage collaborative relationships.

Community

The City employees are now taking their newly developed skills outside the City Hall and are assisting community groups with facilitation. Community engagement initiatives are now led and managed by trained facilitators who bring the new light to the City’s image. Many have observed or participated in the process and understand the way the City is doing things now.

As other champions before him, Mike feels humbled to accept this honor. As a true team player he wants to acknowledge and congratulate the team at Brooklyn Park: Elizabeth Tolzmann, Community Engagement Coordinator and Kim Berggren, Development Project Manager.

MNTOP extends its congratulations to Mike and the City of Brooklyn Park team, and looks forward to seeing your practice grow! ■