

## A Lesson in Team

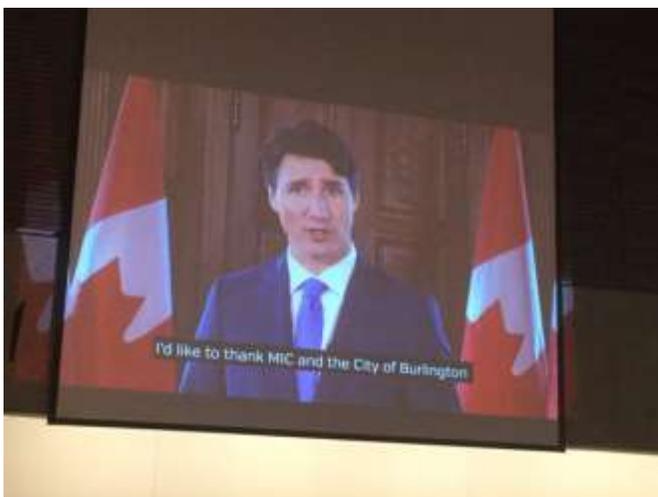
Ever get the sense there is something bigger at play either in the work you are doing or the people you are connecting with?

Recently a group of staff joined together to put a national conference together, The Municipal Innovators Community Conference. The conference happened on Tuesday September 27<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Royal Botanical Gardens and The Art Gallery of Burlington. There were over 120 guests from across Canada that attended. It was clear from the beginning that the main objective of the conference was to bring like minded municipal employees together to share and learn about ideas and innovative programs from cities across Canada, secondly to showcase Burlington.



The organizing team was formed and among this team were Burlington staff from all different areas. All people coming together because they were invited or volunteered....not told! Everyone on the team brought unique skills of creativity, organization, event planning expertise, communication, marketing, planning, problem solving, project management and writing.

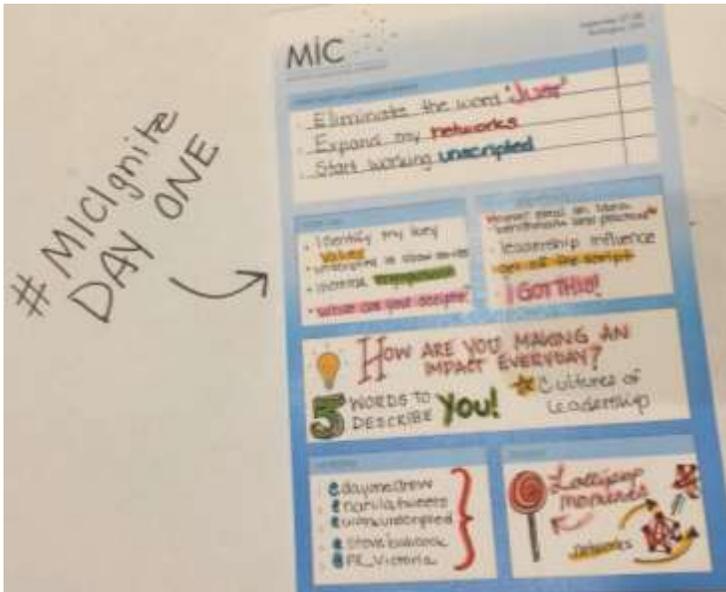
The team started well in advance with idea sharing, program building, logistical discussions, and marketing plans. As with any team there were times when ideas were not agreed upon, logistics seemed impossible and the messages about the upcoming event, were just not working. From the start even finding one event location that could be the venue for both days created logistical complications. On the other hand, there were many successes along way as well, receiving a conference welcome video from the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, getting an overwhelming response from interested municipal panelist speaker and securing a leadership icon Drew Dudley, who's "TED talk" was voted "one of the 15 most inspirational TED talks of all time as the keynote speaker.



The conference happened in September and the days leading up were stressful, busy and filled with quick conversations about necessary tasks to "be ready". However as much as these days were difficult, an important trend started to emerge. Task by task and conversations after conversation, a network of strong, very skilled and committed people joined together to give the best of themselves that they possibly could. These were people not only on the organizing team but others throughout our organization that "pitched in" and contributed too. There were people guiding, supporting and working together getting work done all despite titles, roles or positions in the organization.

We all needed to pack swag bags, carry boxes, plug in cords, set up tables, post up signs, meet guests, run from place to place, set up, take down and repeat on Day 2. It was inspiring to see people from all across our workplace come together and pitch in, all because they wanted our city to be successful!

At the same time as all the behind the scenes commotion was going on, opportunities to learn and share about innovation in municipal government, was happening. Guests were excited, shared ideas, networked with each other and participated in activities and discussions about igniting new ideas, being leaders in innovation and creating cultures of change.



However bigger at play and most profound was that while the conference was encouraging participants to explore and learn about innovation, our own organizing team had explored, cultivated and built the perfect environment for innovation to flourish and here's how they did it...

- Personal commitment drove a commitment to success
- Empowered people made great decisions; no one person was the decision maker
- Uncomfortable conversations lead to solving problems
- Dealing with issues quickly helped to get back on task
- Being humble, accepting mistakes, appreciating everyone's skills and caring about each other made for a good team
- Ideas did not come out perfect the first time; ideas grew, changed and got better when everyone contributed

Congratulations to the team and the City of Burlington, how proud we should all be to work in an organization with creative, committed and willing people.