

ROLE PLAY EXERCISE

Scenario One: Meeting with City Council Members

Your group represents a coalition in Anytown, Ohio, that is seeking to implement a local, comprehensive, city-wide Responsible Beverage Service ordinance. One of your members has a personal relationship with a member of the City Council, and he/she has succeeded in scheduling a meeting with the personal contact and one other City Councilmember. Your task is to prepare for and then role play the meeting. (The trainers will act as the City Councilmembers).

Your coalition has been working on the ordinance for several months and has contacted numerous groups seeking their support. There have been two recent, violent episodes in a local, downtown tavern which have received considerable press attention. You have learned that several bar owners are organizing to oppose the ordinance and have already met with each of the City Councilmembers.

To prepare for the meeting: (1) Identify no more than three key arguments you want to make in support of the ordinance; and (2) Prepare responses to questions you anticipate from the two Councilmembers. Each member of your group should be assigned to at least one argument in favor or one response to a likely question. The role play should be no longer than five minutes.

Trainers' Notes

Perspective:

The City Council members have heard from the bar owners who have raised several concerns (reflected in the questions below). Alcohol issues have not been on the council's radar, and this is a new area for both Councilmembers. Both are neutral at this point and tend to be cautious politicians, although both are also ambitious.

Potential Questions

- Why do we need this ordinance? Isn't the real problem irresponsible bar and liquor store patrons?
- Isn't the solution here more vigilant law enforcement?
- Why should one bad apple result in a punitive measure against all alcohol retail operators?
- Is this anti-business? We need to support business in our community, not create added costs and burdens.
- Are there other cities in Ohio or elsewhere that have adopted an ordinance like this? If so, what has been their experience with it?
- What about state preemption? Do we even have the authority to enact this ordinance?
- Some people have called this an anti-alcohol measure supported by Neo-Prohibitionists. How do you respond to this?

ROLE PLAY EXERCISE

Scenario Two: Meeting with Chamber of Commerce

Your group represents a coalition in Anytown, Ohio, that is seeking to implement a local, comprehensive, city-wide Responsible Beverage Service ordinance. One of your members has a personal relationship with the President of your town's Chamber of Commerce. He is a well-respected businessman in your town who owns a local paint store. The President has agreed to meet with your group. The Executive Director of the Chamber will also be in attendance. Your task is to prepare for and then role play the meeting. (The trainers will act as the President and Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce.)

Your coalition has been working on the ordinance for several months and has contacted numerous groups seeking their support. Several local businesses have told you privately that they support your group's efforts, in particular because of two recent violent episodes in a local, downtown tavern that received considerable press attention. You have developed a draft of the ordinance, which will be introduced by a supporter on the City Council in the near future.

Your previous contacts with the Chamber of Commerce have been lukewarm at best. You have learned that several bar owners have recently joined the Chamber and are lobbying the Chamber to oppose the proposed ordinance.

To prepare for the meeting: (1) Identify no more than three key arguments you want to make in support of the ordinance; and (2) Prepare responses to questions you anticipate from the Chamber representatives. Each member of your group should be assigned to at least one argument in favor or one response to a likely question. The role play should be no longer than five minutes.

Trainers' Notes

Perspective:

The Chamber of Commerce has spent a good deal of energy improving its image in the city and seeking support from local politicians. Its membership is growing and it has as a high priority developing a strong business voice to the community. The President and ED do not want to create any public division among its membership. The bar owners that have recently joined the organization are not well-respected in the business community and the President and ED consider their recent applications for membership opportunistic.

Potential Questions:

- Why do we need this ordinance? Isn't the real problem irresponsible bar and liquor store patrons?
- Isn't the solution here more vigilant law enforcement?
- What costs will the businesses incur if this is enacted? Will businesses receive any assistance?
- Is this anti-business? We need to support business in our community, not create added costs and burdens.
- Shouldn't the ordinance treat different types of businesses differently?
- Are there other cities in Ohio or elsewhere that have adopted an ordinance like this? If so, what has been their experience with it?