

# Iowa Area Development Group

## Partners Forum

### TOP 5 IDEAS

#### Dan Culhane, President & CEO

#### Ames Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development

1. **GO ON A TRIP** - Take a Leadership visit, often referred to as an Inter-City Leadership visit, to another community – compare, contrast, what can we do better? Both the economic development professional and the board/volunteers/elected officials/business community members can all gain value from a fresh perspective. We find new ideas and we also find validation that we are indeed doing a few things right, too. We have visited Manhattan, KS; Columbia, MO; and will visit Bloomington, IN in October of this year.

- <https://secure.acce.org/wiki/intercity-visit/>
- <https://www.ameschamber.com/news/media-releases/inter-city-trips-provide-inspiration-for-continual-improvement>

2. **COMMUNICATE** – Be a tireless communicator - educate your board, elected officials, influencers and be transparent. Talk to your media and get to know them so when the story breaks you have a relationship with them. I am constantly connecting with our businesses, our funders, our elected officials, constantly working to keep people in the boat. Relationships are critical in any line of business and obviously vital in the economic development business.

- Write a note to someone – say thank you, offer congratulations, express appreciation.
- Stop emailing and texting. Go visit someone on their turf and speak to them.
- Personal, face to face, communication is still best.
- Hard telling me no when I am sitting across from you. Easy when I drop you an email.

3. **REFLECT** - Communities need to self-reflect – which one are you? Are you the community that finds 10 reasons why a project can happen or the community that finds 10 reasons why it won't?

- Push your elected officials, board members, and business community to strive for excellence.
- Encourage strategic thinking and visioning.
- How can your organization be more proactive and less reactive?

4. **CHANGE!** Be nimble and willing to stretch yourself and your organization. Five years ago, we didn't talk much about workforce solutions. We talk about them every day now as the Ames MSA has the lowest unemployment rate in the US. Implement a local Workforce Program – today.

- Projects look different.
- Expectations are changing.
- We can no longer do things like we have always done them in this business.

5. **IMPRESSIONS MATTER** – First impressions and the little things DO MATTER - We are in the business of getting to the next step.

- Pay attention to detail.
- Worry about appearances.
- Commit to excellence.
- Educate everyone on the team knows the importance in doing so.
- Remember the Team - In sports there is no I in team. Economic development is no different. When you win there is always plenty of credit to go around.
- <https://financebuzz.com/investing-millionaires-warren-buffett-stocks>