How a Grassroots Effort Defeated a Maritime-Busting Local Initiative and Where We’ve Gone From There
Port of San Diego
Jurisdiction: Five Member Cities
Two cargo terminals:
- Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal
- National City Marine Terminal

Cargo types:
- Bulk and breakbulk
- Containers
- Refrigerated products
- Automobiles
- Project cargo & military cargo

Markets: Asia, Latin America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand
Proposition B, a voter referendum, that would allow the development of hotels, restaurants and a football stadium on our marine terminal in San Diego.
Environment at the time:

- Gentrification started in the late 1980s
- Prime waterfront location during real estate boom
- Economic impact of maritime jobs relatively unknown
Defeating Prop B

- The Port could not campaign against Prop B as a public agency
- The Port’s partners launched a multi-pronged approach to implement a strategy to inform voters
Why Partnerships Worked

The Working Waterfront Group

- Formed in 2005 when efforts were first being made to use maritime land for development of a sports stadium

- Implemented a grassroots campaign that resulted in a groundswell of opposition to Prop B
- Serious homeland security concerns
- Letter in opposition from Secretary of the Navy
- Television advertisement that played last week before election
Voice of the US Military

Agency: Armour Media Group
Client: No on B
Title: "Dangerous"
Duration: 30 minutes
File: NB08-101
Date: 10-24-08
Unanimous, bipartisan San Diego Congressional Delegation opposed

State Attorney General issued a legal opinion against the referendum

Election Results: 70% opposed, 30% supported
Lessons Learned

- **Internal unity – top to bottom**
- **Multi-pronged approach**
  - Legal
  - Communications
  - Trade development
- **Constant education & communication**
- **Cannot operate in a vacuum**
Prop B’s ROI

- Working Waterfront Group grew in stature in the region
  - Became a fixture in Sacramento
  - Assisted other west coast groups to form
- Port’s mission understood
- Transition Zone policy
Driving ROI

- Constantly create and nurture relationships
  - Driving force in creating groundswell
- How do you keep momentum when there’s no longer a battle to fight?
The ROI Message

- This is YOUR PORT
- We are a MARITIME NATION
Return on Involvement

- **Formation of External Relations Division**
  - Government & Community Relations
  - Corporate Communications
  - Public Art
  - Grants
  - Office/Fiduciary Agent
Expand relationships
- Facilitate collaboration between organizations and communities
- Engage diverse parties
- Advocate maritime platforms and strategy
Questions &
Comments