
Leveraging an Overlooked Factor During Risk Analysis: **Reputation Management**

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reVerb
communications



the price
is right

"come
on
down!"



PLINKO

5000 1000 500 100 50 10 5 1

the price
is right



Concrete Protective Liner $\neq$ Plinko Building Material



GAME THEORY

Finite v. Infinite Games

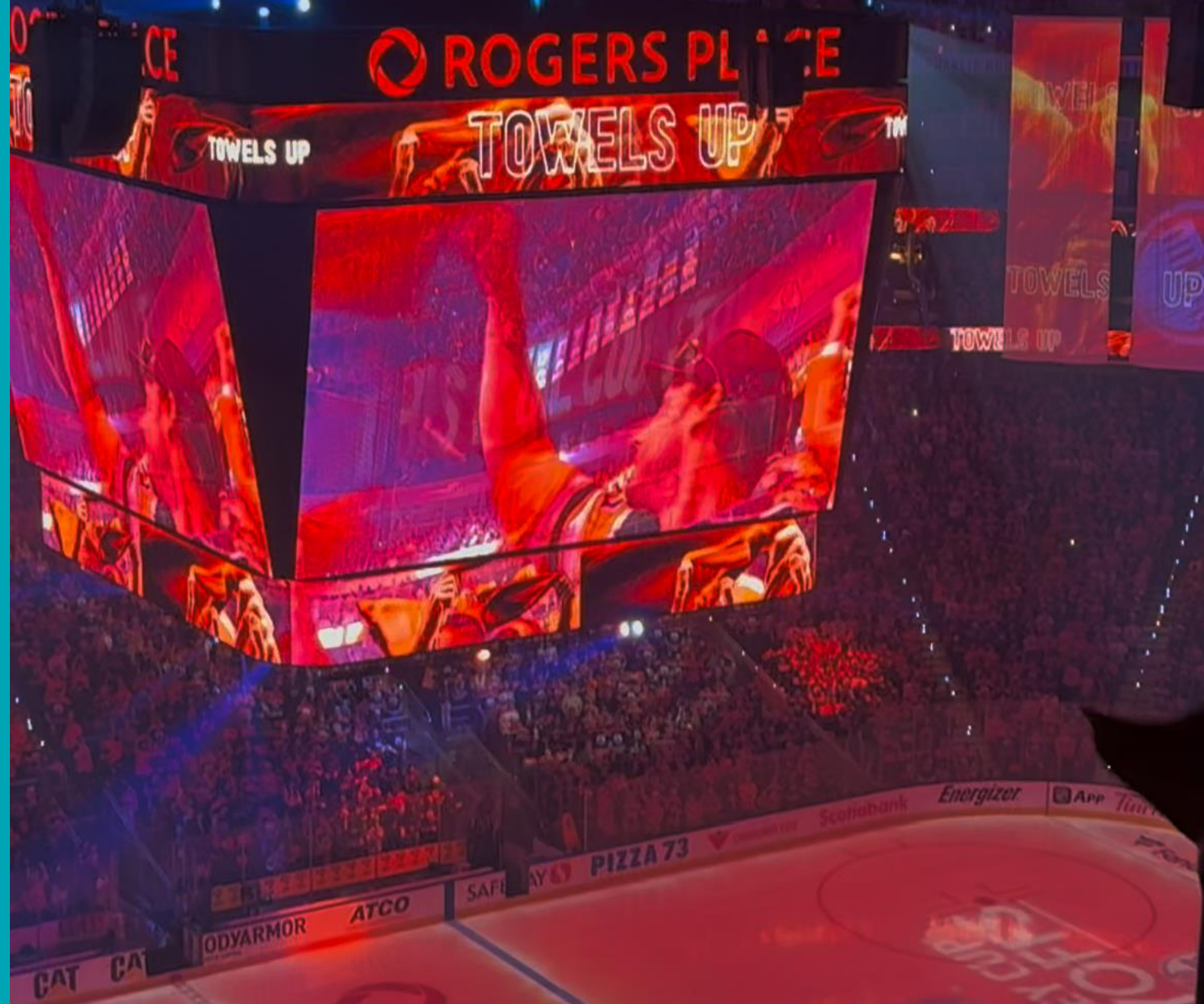
James P. Carse - 1986

Finite games have fixed players, fixed rules and a clear endpoint.

Infinite games have shifting players, evolving rules and no defined endpoint. The goal isn't to win; it's to keep playing.



Hockey is a Finite Game



Oilers Playoff Run v. Dallas Stars: May 27, 2025

Finite Game:

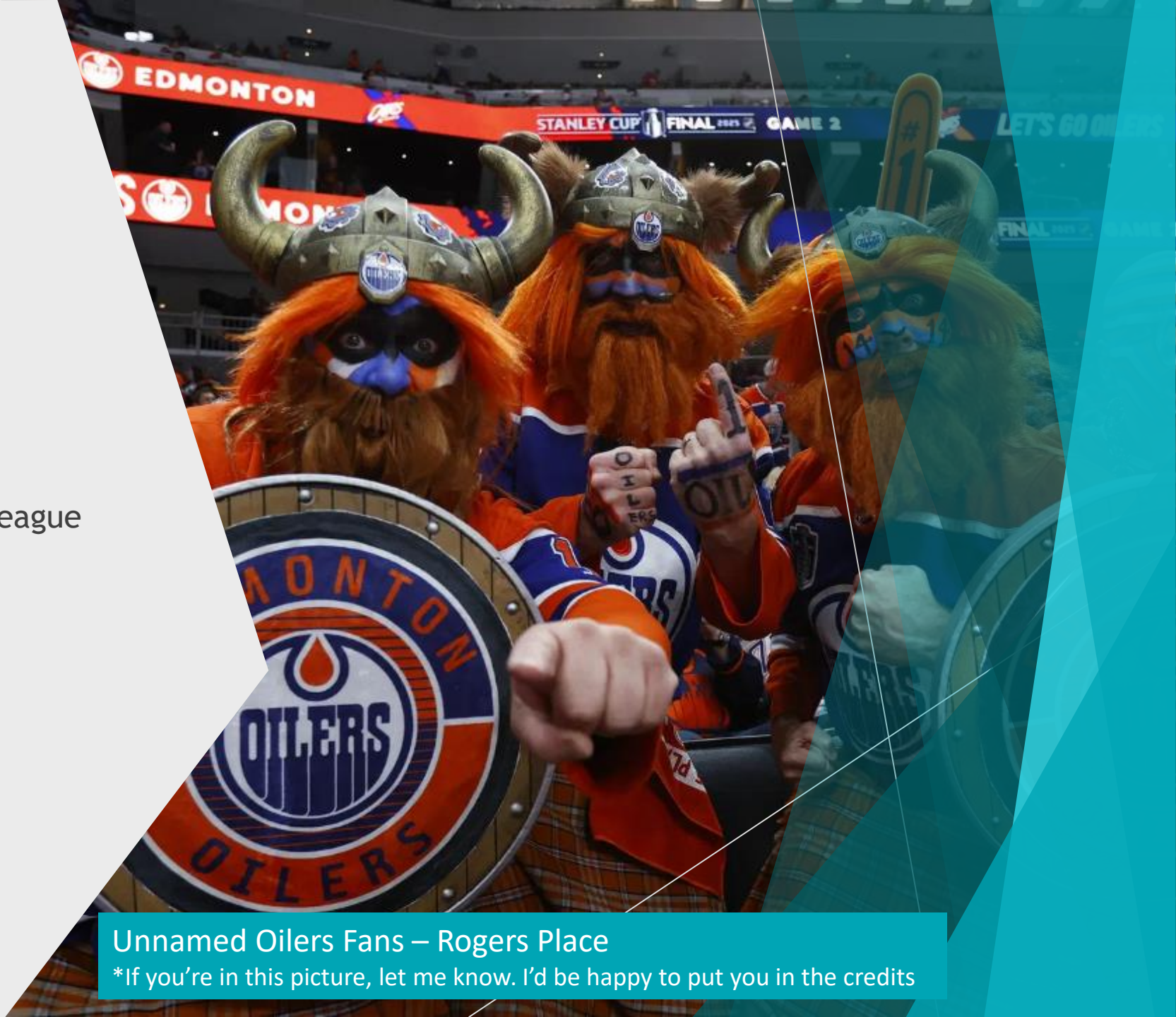
🏒 Players (during the game)

Extended Game:

🏒 Players (off-ice), owners & the league

Infinite Game:

🏒 Fans and the General Public



Unnamed Oilers Fans – Rogers Place

*If you're in this picture, let me know. I'd be happy to put you in the credits

Finite Game:

 Project Delivery Team

Extended Game:

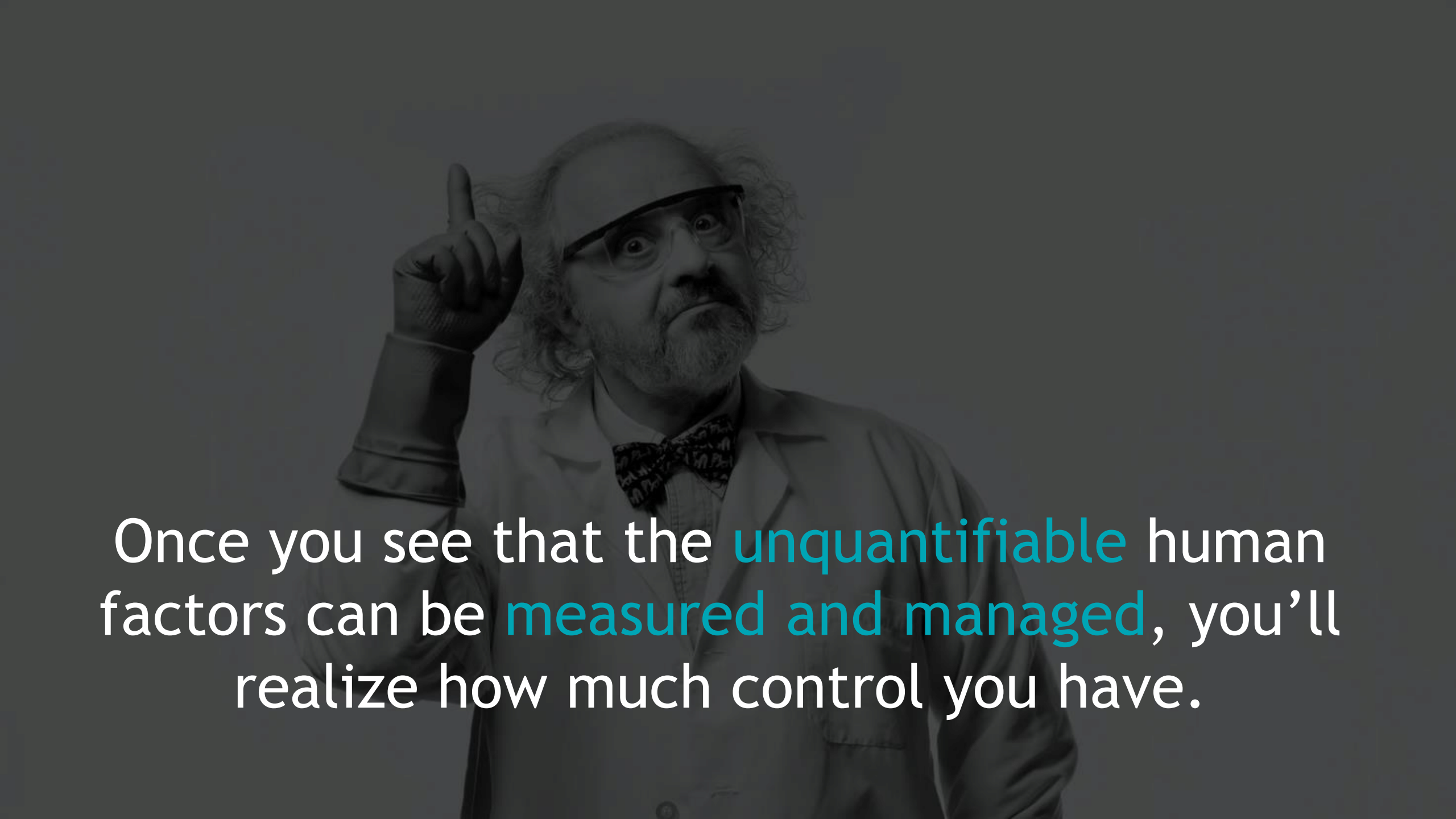
 Project Owners

Infinite Game:

 Citizens - People Living with the Project



Tawatinâ LRT Bridge – Edmonton, AB



Once you see that the **unquantifiable** human factors can be **measured and managed**, you'll realize how much control you have.

Tawatinâ LRT Bridge – Edmonton, AB

*Same bridge as 2 slides ago from a different perspective



Tension:

Project Completion v.
Continuity

AKA

Cost/Schedule/Commissioning
v. Permanence/Legacy





Last Chance to Volunteer in This Presentation

Don't live with regret.

- ▶ Tech Support
 - ▶ Cold Hand-Off v. Warm Hand Off
- ▶ Project Transition
 - ▶ Cold Hand-Off v. Warm Hand Off

**WE NEED PRAGMATIC SOLUTIONS
TO MOVE PROJECTS FORWARD.**

Not Me.

*Just a visualization of someone who seems to be 'tech support'



Effective engagement is about everyone understanding what success actually looks like and being **aligned** enough to get there.

A photograph of a man with long dark hair, wearing a floral headband with sunglasses perched on top, and a white shirt with a colorful floral scarf. He is playing an acoustic guitar. The background is a blurred outdoor festival scene with other people and trees. The image is partially covered by a large blue geometric overlay on the right side.

Still Not Me.

*And NOT a public engagement event

PROJECT EXAMPLE: WESTERN ALBERTA TRANSMISSION LINE

Alberta Court of Appeal reconfirms that the Surface Rights Board's role is ancillary to regulators who authorize or permit energy development

Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

BLG
Borden Ladner Gervais



Canada | June 15 2015

On June 9, 2015, the Alberta Court of Appeal released its memorandum of judgment (issued orally from the bench on May 7, 2015) in *Togstad v Alberta (Surface Rights Board)* 2015 ABCA 192 ([found here](#)). On appeal were two separate decisions from the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, namely *Togstad v Alberta (Surface Rights Board)*, 2014 ABQB 485 and *Kure v Alberta (Surface Rights Board)*, 2014 ABQB 572. The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeals, upheld the decisions of the Court of Queen's Bench, and stated that the appellant's judicial review applications, which challenged the decision of the Alberta Surface Rights Board ("SRB"), were a collateral attack on a decision made by the Alberta Utilities Commission ("AUC").

AltaLink Management ("AltaLink") obtained a permit and license from the AUC to construct and operate the Western Alberta Transmission Line ("WATL"). The AUC had determined, in an extensive proceeding, that WATL is wholly within Alberta and that the landowners whose property for the Togstad and Kures' jurisdiction of the



ABOUT US LINKS COMPENSATION DECISIONS CONTACT US NEWS RELEASES
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TRANSMISSION LINE HEARING COULD END UP COSTING

Transmission line hearing could end up costing taxpayers big: Anglin
EDMONTON, AB (June 14, 2012) Alberta taxpayers could be on hook for millions of dollars if the Alberta Utilities Commission's hearing into the Western Alberta Transmission Line forges ahead, Wildrose Utilities Critic Joe Anglin said today.
In 2010, the AUC paid \$30 million in taxpayer dollars to AltaLink after a 2007 transmission line hearing was declared a mistrial. The money was intended to recoup AltaLink's costs for participating in the compromised hearing.
Yesterday, the AUC decided to forge ahead with the current WATL hearing despite a forthcoming Alberta Court of Appeal ruling that could change the entire scope of the hearing.
The Court will rule on whether or not the AUC has the authority to overturn the proposed line. Currently, the AUC claims it only has the power to decide "They're making the same mistake again - and it's Alberta families and businesses who will end up paying for it."

"We know this ruling could force this process to start all over again at Day 1. If so, it will fall on taxpayers - again - to compensate AltaLink," Anglin said.
When the hearing began on Monday, Anglin asked that the proceedings be adjourned until the Court of Appeal ruling.
"When a higher court is hearing an issue, the lower court doesn't proceed," Anglin said.
Wildrose.ca June 14, 2012

Alberta landowners seek leave to appeal transmission line

By The Staff • The Canadian Press
Posted January 4, 2013 11:58 am • 1 min read



EDMONTON - Opponents of a newly approved electricity transmission line in Alberta hope to unplug the multi-billion dollar project in court.

The Alberta Utilities Commission approved AltaLink's \$1.5-billion Western Alberta Transmission Line last month.

Landowners who live along the line's route between Edmonton and Calgary are seeking leave to challenge the decision March 28 in the Alberta Court of

TheAlbertan

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We make hearing aids affordable

View

Deer County man fights AltaLink right-of-way in court

There has been down this road before except last time the stakes were not as high.



RETA

Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans

Opposition to AltaLink's Western Alberta Transmission Line Continues



The Western Producer reports on concerns recently raised by several interveners at the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) hearing on the controversial Western Alberta Transmission Line (WATL).

One Crossfield-area farmer, Grant Budgeon, estimates nearly 600 landowners will be negatively affected by the WATL. Gary Edward, a Crossfield-area dairy farmer, said any hope of expansion for his farm is dashed if AltaLink's preferred route crosses over his dairy farm. He says, "The philosophy of corridors is a killer for landowners when trespassing (by utilities) affects people's ability to make a living. It affects their way of life and I think we need to take another look at it."

There has been significant controversy over this particular line for many years. In 2007, the (at that time) Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) was found guilty of hiring private investigators to illegally spy on landowners opposed to a previously proposed overhead 500kV power line. One of the results of this guilty conviction was the dismantling of the AEUB and the creation of the AUC and the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) by the Alberta Government. However, unfortunately nothing has really changed - the AUC continues to approve almost every electricity transmission application brought before it, and the ERCB continues to approve almost every oil, natural gas, tar sands, coal and pipeline development application it receives.



British Columbia

10 years after its completion, Canada Line remains bitter Olympic legacy for Cambie Street businesses

Merchants won 2018 lawsuit for financial losses, but appeal by TransLink, SNC-Lavalin still to be settled



Eric Rankin · CBC News · Posted: Feb 19, 2020 6:00 AM MST | Last Updated: February 19, 2020



Reuters

Canada's long-delayed Trans Mountain oil pipeline starts operations

After 12 years and C\$34 billion (\$25 billion), Canada's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (TMX) began commercial operations on Wednesday.

May 1, 2024



HOME > OPINION

Opinion: The buck stops nowhere - North Shore wastewater boondoggle needs accountability

An instructor in supply chain and procurement says Metro Vancouver is still dodging transparency on the doomed sewage plant debacle

Charlie Grahn
Aug 9, 2024 4:00 PM



The bottom of the sludge digester tower during work on the massive new sewage treatment plant in North Vancouver in March 2021. | Paul McGrath / North Shore News files

PRE-BID PROJECTS

Click here to see Canada's most comprehensive listing of

Home News Government Metro Vancouver to initiate independent review of troubled North Shore was



GOVERNMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, PROJECTS

Metro Vancouver to initiate independent review of troubled North Shore wastewater project

DCN-JOC News Services June 19, 2024



COURTESY METRO VANCOUVER — Aerial rendering of North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Business

If proposed pipeline fails, Kinder Morgan could take Canada to court

U.S. company could launch a NAFTA claim seeking billions of dollars



Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs president, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, centre, says Kinder Morgan has 'finally woken up and smelled the coffee and realized that you can't build a pipeline in a war zone.' (CBC)

Montreal

Legault rejects Quebec City's latest tramway plan, taps Caisse de dépôt to study options

City had proposed taking charge of project, relying on province to fund 50%

CBC News · Posted: Nov 09, 2023 5:57 AM MST | Last Updated: November 9, 2023



Engagement has been turned into a paper exercise that slows things down with no results.



Not a reVerb Associate

*Yes, communications firms have been known to show up looking like this!

Reputation Management

≠

Crisis Response

- ▶ Cold handoffs = lost context
- ▶ Engagement is called in too late
- ▶ Should be incorporated early to prevent risk



All Papers Referenced Can be Downloaded on reVerb's Website

International Journal of Project Management, Volume 28, Issue 3,
April 2010, Pages 245-255

Deliberate ignorance in project risk management

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Risk Management Practices in Large-Scale Engineering Projects: Trends and Innovations

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Article

The Risk Mitigation Effect of Social Responsibility: Evidence from International Construction Projects

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between social responsibility and risk in international construction projects using corporate reputation and customer satisfaction as mediating variables. This study collected 141 valid data using the questionnaire method and used partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) and fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to analyze the data. The PLS-SEM results showed that, in international construction projects, social responsibility has no direct impact on risk but has a positive impact on corporate reputation and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between social responsibility and risk in international construction projects, but corporate reputation did not mediate this relationship. This study also found that corporate reputation and customer satisfaction have a serial mediating role in this relationship. In addition, the fsQCA results further confirmed that improving customer satisfaction is a necessary condition for mitigating risks in international construction projects. In terms of the different dimensions of social responsibility, the protection of shareholders' rights is a core condition for mitigating risks in international construction projects. This study provides useful insights for international construction project managers to develop risk mitigation plans from the perspective of social responsibility.

Keywords: social responsibility; risk; international construction projects; corporate reputation; customer satisfaction



Academic Editor: Cristina Roldan

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Sustainability 2024, 17, 3149

<https://doi.org/10.3390/su17073149>

Behavioral Science

Loss Aversion

(Tversky & Kahneman, 1981)

Communities fight harder to prevent a perceived loss than to gain a potential benefit.

Procedural Justice Research

(Lind & Tyler, 1988)

People are more likely to accept unfavourable outcomes when they believe the process was fair and their voice was heard.

Trust Asymmetry Theory

(Lewicki & Bunker, 1996)

Trust builds slowly and erodes quickly — meaning a single misstep can undo years of work.

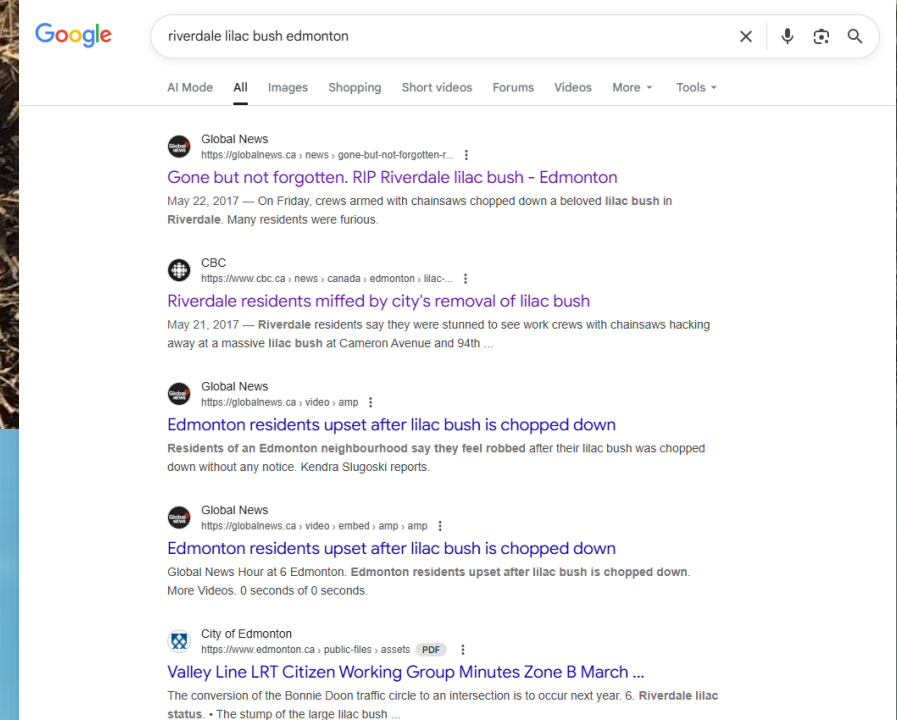




Micro Example:

Lilac Bush





The chainsaw-wielding workers were employed by TransEd, the company hired to build and operate the **Valley LRT line**.

A rest-in-peace sign and flowers have since been placed on the mound of sawed-off limbs. There is also a makeshift card and one sign staked in the remnants that reads "Requiem for a City."



- ▶ The bush itself wasn't the issue.
- ▶ The project team saw a plant in the way of progress.
- ▶ The community saw a symbol of something that had quietly belonged to the space for decades.
- ▶ Because of these varying perspectives and objectives, even a small action — like removing a bush — became a trigger.



EMOTION > LOGIC

When people feel disrespected or ignored,
the issue becomes moral, not technical.





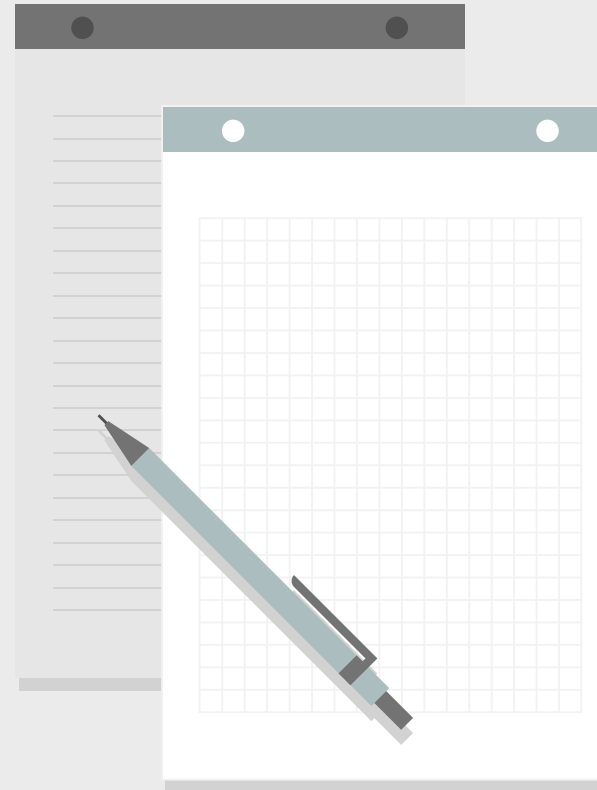
**ENGAGEMENT AND REUPTATION
RISK FACTORS BELONG IN THE
RISK MATRIX.**

Don't just "note" it
Scan for it, categorize it and quantify it.

Resistance Is a Data Point

Why Projects Fail

- ▶ Engagement is misunderstood as appeasement
- ▶ Resistance is dismissed instead of analyzed
- ▶ Risks are deferred until they explode



The Cost of Ignoring It

- ▶ One lilac bush: \$30,000
- ▶ Expropriation: **Millions**
- ▶ Indigenous challenge: **Shutdowns**
- ▶ Political fight: **Headlines and reputational damage**



e) Public Engagement and What We Heard Reports

Annexation is a complicated and potentially confusing process; [REDACTED] wants to ensure that it provides clear and effective resources to support understanding of the details related to annexation and provides opportunities for conversation regarding potential misunderstandings, challenges, and opportunities. A proposed stakeholder engagement approach was provided with the City's Notice of Intent submitted February 4, 2025. This should be considered only a minimum and should be exceeded in line with the City's Public Engagement Framework.

The City's website already contains information about annexation that can be used as a foundation for this work at [REDACTED]

- i. Develop a public engagement plan and lead public engagement events for the project guided by the [REDACTED] Public Engagement Framework. This engagement must, at minimum, meet the annexation application requirements.
- ii. The public engagement plan must include / speak to the purpose and scope of the engagement (what are we engaging about), who is being engaged and their level of influence, barriers to participate and mitigation strategies, public engagement techniques that will be used, an outline of the logistics involved and collateral that will be created to hold each engagement activity (Public Engagement Plan Template).
- iii. Develop and create all collateral required to facilitate the engagement activities (e.g., presentation slide decks, display boards at open houses, takeaway material). Collateral must meet the City's brand guidelines and design standards.
- iv. Engagement will occur throughout the project, with the Consultant leading all public engagement activities.
- v. Consideration should be given to informing interest-holders of the rationale for annexation, an overview of the process, and the role of the interest-holders within the process.
- vi. Attention should be given to facilitating an inviting and innovative approach that allows for engagement opportunities at multiple events and via multiple mediums.
- vii. At the onset of this process, the Consultant will be tasked with facilitating a workshop with City Administration to identify structure communication and engagement.
- viii. A What We Heard Report will be required following each phase of engagement with a summary document for the whole process completed to accompany the annexation application. Each What We Heard Report and summary document must meet the City's brand guidelines and design standards.

1 Page (Engagement) vs. 42 Pages (Condition Ax and Load Evaluation)

The Successful Proponent will be required to work with the City's communications and marketing team, who will be responsible for developing a communications plan to promote all engagement activities, and share each What We Heard Report, to the public.

Engagement activities and/or meetings may utilize City facilities, staff, and resources where appropriate. Any required elements (food and refreshments, printed materials, etc.), that would be the responsibility of the City must be clearly identified in the proposal.



CONDITION ASSESSMENT & LOAD EVALUATION

8 km north of Lac La Biche

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

July 17, 2023

Most

In Practice

- ▶ Handed off to EITs as a low-risk task
- ▶ Managed off the side of a desk
- ▶ Loses to technical priorities

Public-Sector Reality

- ▶ Same staff, multiple projects
- ▶ Tight budgets and timelines
- ▶ Gaps form → context lost → promises forgotten

**Where
Engagement
Breaks Down**



- ▶ If the stakeholder registry isn't known at kickoff, it's a critical failure
- ▶ Estimators review every technical detail, why not engagement history?
- ▶ What if missing stakeholder data triggered an RFI?

Instead of saying:

“Well, that’s just how it is,”

What if we forced a change
where **engagement is
planned, tracked, and
measured** with the same
seriousness as every other
part of the project?

Stakeholder engagement & reputation management is about understanding the game you're in, not trying to control it.

**Knowing when to lead,
when to listen, and when
to adjust your move.**





The New Reality of Engagement

- Projects move slower than public perception
- Trust is fragile: easy to lose, hard to rebuild
- Engagement is about awareness, not control
- Ignoring it turns manageable risks into costly problems
- Reputation is managed via engagement



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