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SITE SELECTION | SITE SELECTION PLAYBOOK 2024

# Managing Community Sentiment and Activism

Effectively addressing concerns and building community support for successful site selection.

Doug Heinz, Manager, Site Selection & Incentives Advisory, Kroll

Q3 2024



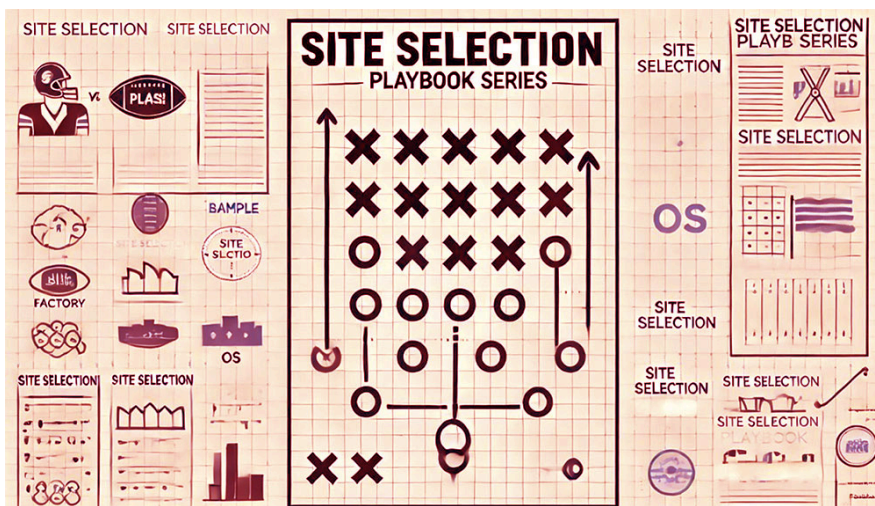
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strategic insights and practical advice for manufacturing executives. Published by Area Development Magazine, the series aims to guide businesses through the complexities of site selection to ensure successful project outcomes: The Role of Data-Driven Site Selection in Modern Manufacturing; Crafting Effective Incentive Packages; Ensuring Compliance and Maximizing Incentive Benefits; Understanding the Importance of Speed in Closing Deals; Optimizing Incentive Approval Timelines; Navigating Non-Disclosure Agreements in Site Selection; Engaging Local Stakeholders for Site Selection Success; Managing Community Sentiment and Activism

Community sentiment and activism can significantly impact the site selection process for manufacturing projects. Understanding and managing these factors is crucial for securing local support and ensuring project success. This article explores the importance of community sentiment, strategies for identifying and addressing opposition, and offers best practices for managing activism in the site selection process.

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### Identifying and Understanding Opposition

The first step in managing community sentiment is identifying potential sources of opposition. Opposition can arise from various groups, including local residents, environmental activists, and other interest groups. Common sources of opposition for manufacturing projects include concerns about environmental impact, noise, traffic, and changes to the local landscape.

Monitoring community sentiment through social media, local news, and community meetings can provide early warning signs of potential opposition.

Understanding the specific concerns and motivations of these groups is essential for developing effective strategies to address them.

### Strategies for Addressing Concerns

To effectively manage community sentiment and address opposition, manufacturing executives can adopt several strategies:

- 1. Early and Transparent Communication:** Engaging with the community early in the site selection process and maintaining transparent communication can build trust and reduce opposition. Providing clear and accurate information about the project, its benefits, and its potential impact can help address concerns and dispel misconceptions.
- 2. Community Engagement Meetings:** Holding town hall meetings, public forums, and other community engagement events provides an opportunity for residents to voice their concerns and ask questions. These meetings also allow companies to present the project's benefits and address any issues directly.
- 3. Tailored Messaging:** Crafting messages that resonate with the specific concerns of different community groups can enhance the

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job creation and economic benefits can appeal to residents

concerned about local employment opportunities, while highlighting environmental safeguards can address concerns from environmental activists.

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4. **Collaboration with Local Leaders:** Working closely with local leaders, such as mayors, city council members, and community organizations, can help build support for the project. These leaders can serve as advocates and help convey the project's benefits to the broader community.
5. **Mitigation Measures:** Implementing measures to mitigate potential negative impacts can address specific concerns and reduce opposition. For example, investing in noise reduction technologies, traffic management plans, and environmental conservation efforts can demonstrate a commitment to minimizing the project's impact on the community.

### Case Examples

Several case examples illustrate the importance of managing community sentiment. In one project, a manufacturing company faced significant opposition from environmental activists concerned about the impact of a new facility. By holding a series of town hall meetings, the company was able to address concerns, present their environmental protection plans, and build trust with the community. The proactive engagement helped secure local support and move the project forward.

In another instance, a renewable energy project encountered opposition from residents who were worried about changes to the local landscape. By collaborating with local leaders and implementing visual impact mitigation measures, the company was able to address concerns and gain the community's approval.

### Takeaway

Managing community sentiment and activism is a critical component of the site selection process for manufacturing projects. By identifying potential sources of opposition, engaging in early and transparent communication, holding community meetings, tailoring messaging to specific concerns, collaborating with local leaders, and implementing mitigation measures, manufacturing executives can build local support and reduce opposition. Effective management of community sentiment not only facilitates the site selection process but also ensures long-term success and positive relationships with the community.

#### Doug Heinz, Manager, Site Selection & Incentives Advisory, Kroll

Doug Heinz, based in Austin, TX, US, is currently a Manager, Site Selection and Incentives Advisory at Kroll. Doug Heinz brings experience from previous roles at ASE Group Inc. and Ryan. Doug Heinz holds a 2008 - 2011 Bachelor's Degree in Finance @ Texas Tech University. With a robust skill set that includes Leadership, Consulting, Public Speaking, Accounting, Financial Modeling and more.

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