

# Bert Stitt - Resume

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## Shifting Community Culture via Intentional Stewardship

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### Skills &

#### Attributes:

Seasoned, and Intuitive Facilitator • Effective Public/Motivational Speaker • Excellent Writing and Communication • Able and Compassionate Manager of Difficult People and Difficult Situations • Effective Task Master • Resourceful Implementer • Patient • Persistent • Passionate • Willing to go the extra mile • Adept at calm observation in the midst of chaos and anxiety ... while having fun.

### Core Beliefs

#### And

#### Intentions:

- I believe that skillful process provides the best guarantee for successful results.
  - ✓ I intend to coach community members to become more practiced in skillful processes that help realize their dreams.
- I believe that the public is not defined by the term 'stakeholder' and vice versa.
  - ✓ I intend to provide full opportunity to involve the public in conversations about matters that affect their lives.
- I believe that the public often operates at a huge deficit due to the phenomenon of the average person not liking, believing or trusting professionals, public officials, and academics: This occurs because of a history of painful experiences where expert information has been used to assuage or even deceive the public.
  - ✓ I intend to coach the public in finding the portal through which important expert information can be accessed while putting aside the blocks of dislike, distrust and disbelief.

### Professional

#### History:

Owner – Bert Stitt & Associates a consulting practice engaged in providing service in the areas of facilitation, community building, public engagement, strategic planning, visioning, meeting coaching, and mediation. (Since 1989)

- Established a three-state (Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota) presence in many aspects of community development: Downtowns Development, Environmental Initiatives, Organizational Development, Small Business Development
- Manage all of the day-to-day affairs of a small business

- Frequently raise the money to pay my fees.
- Downtown Development Coordinator – State of Wisconsin Department of Local Affairs and Development (re-named Department of Development and now the Department of Commerce.) (1979 – 1989)
- Built the foundation for a downtown program in the State of Wisconsin -Starting from scratch.
  - Developed a program designed to build the capacity of local people to Better handle their own downtown revitalization and development.
  - Provided the research and background support to write the Business Improvement District (BID) legislation, signed into law in 1984: Also built public awareness of the importance of this legislation.
  - Designed and implemented the Interactive Strategic Planning (ISP) Program which emphasized the importance of engaging the entire community in the process of downtown visioning and regeneration.
  - Organized the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council, a statewide organization that provides education and advocacy to support downtown development.
  - Provided front-end awareness building and staff support to getting legislation for the Wisconsin Main Street Program, A model for managing downtowns.

Milwaukee (1969 - 1979)

During these years I was involved in a creative period of discovery and emergence for myself and the Lower East Side community of Milwaukee.

- Wrote fashion copy for the Boston Store advertising department.
- Served as Advertising Manager for the underground newspaper, Kaleidoscope
- Assumed the role as 'Manager of the Brady Street Merchant's Association
  - ✓ Ran the highly successful (85,000 attendance) Bradystreet Festivals
  - ✓ Organized the First Neighborhood Credit Union
  - ✓ Organized the Brady Street Development Corporation
- Operated a boutique advertising agency from which I handled the Brady Street projects as well as serving several local retailers and promoting Super Week and other bicycle racing events.

Education: B.A. Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan (April 1969)  
English Literature – Criticism

Training: Advanced Facilitator Training – Interaction Associates, San Francisco. An intensive one-week interactive training that established the basis for confident facilitation.

Public Engagement Training – The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), A series of training workshops designed to enhance skills in providing public participation.

Mediation Training - Lincoln Land Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Intensive training in the mediation skills of land use dispute.

Familiar Public Engagement Methodologies Interactive Strategic Planning  
A process I developed that includes visioning, the development of sets of Strategic Directions populated with participants who form Action Teams which start by researching their subject and carries through with sharing in Tent Meetings and presentations to Town Meetings and results in significant projects that serve the community. [www.bertstitt.com](http://www.bertstitt.com)

Open Space Technology  
An excellent model for engaging groups totally on their terms and providing them the space to build their own agendas, choose their area they most want to participate in and determine their own work plan. <http://www.openspaceworld.org/>

Appreciative Inquiry Summit  
Using the excellent principles of Appreciative Inquiry where we focus on what works and a healthy and vital future and thus inspire participants to step forward with the confidence that they can build a great future. <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>

Future Search Conference  
A process that incorporates the elements of a good old fashioned potluck supper, and appreciation of the past, understanding of the present and <http://www.futuresearch.net/index.cfm>

America Speaks  
A method of public engagement that uses current technology to provide access to the public across wide swaths of geography in real time conversations. Has the capacity to engage thousands. <http://www.americaspeaks.org>

Current  
Projects:  
2010- 2011

East Side Water Supply Study / Madison Water Utility  
Provide public engagement consulting as the Water Utility  
Undertakes a major study of future water supply and quality needs  
so as to establish future budgeting to meet those needs.

Importantly; establish a context within which the Water Utility  
can re-build trust with the community.

Orchard Ridge Neighborhood Association / Madison, WI  
Providing facilitation, coaching and strategic planning services for  
this southwest side Madison neighborhood. Preparing them to  
undertake a full planning process in light of many social and market  
challenges.

Wisconsin Association of School Boards / Madison, WI  
Providing meeting coaching and training services for school board  
members

Lakeside Street Business Improvement Initiative /  
Madison, WI  
Providing Visioning and Strategic Planning Consultation to establish a  
platform for future improvements to the district.

Imagine  
A project, in development, to establish a framework designed  
to engage the public from across the capital region in a  
conversation focused on heating up the connectivity within  
the creative ecology of the region.

Representative  
Past  
Clients:

Community Visioning (a sampling)

New Glarus, WI (1991 – 2004)  
Facilitated my signature Interactive Strategic Planning process;  
starting with a full-day visioning retreat in 1991. Resulted in several  
'impossible' accomplishments and the relationship has continued  
over the years to include continuing follow-up involving facilitation,  
coaching, mediation.

Evansville, WI (2000 - Present)

Facilitate the ISP process, starting with an all-day visioning retreat that resulted in addressing many inherent dysfunctions in the community conversation and has produced a complete change in attitude and accomplishments, including several restored downtown buildings, an ongoing organizational construct known as ECP (Evansville Community Partners) and several other initiatives.

New Orleans (2005 – 2006)

Post-Katrina Visioning and follow up for the Pontilly (Gentilly Woods and Pontchartrain Park) Neighborhood. Operating in the very difficult environment of the months following the storm and providing facilitation, coaching and support to residents who opted to stay in New Orleans even though their homes were ruined. Immediate result was an all-day visioning session with some 400 people coming from all across the country and participating in getting focused on the future of the neighborhoods.

Gays Mills, WI (2007-2008)

Providing Facilitation, coaching and mediation skills to community dynamics of the flooding of the Kickapoo River in August of 07 and June of 08.

### Natural Resources/The Environment

Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation

Token Creek Watershed Project (1996-97)

The Foundation wanted to reduce the advent of stream bank erosion and otherwise restore the creek to healthy water temperatures and purity. Using a 'Future Search' model we engaged the people from multiple jurisdictions to look at the future of the watershed.

This project was done as a team effort with Drew Howick of Howick Associates.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Bureau of Wildlife Management

Deer 2000 (1997- 2000)

An extensive State-wide public engagement process seeking to establish some consensus regarding deer herd management in the State of Wisconsin. The project involved large and small meetings at locations throughout the geographic distribution of the State.

Including responses to in-depth surveys, the project eventually involved some 26,000 people.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Bureau of Waste Management (2004)  
Facilitate staff and managers in voicing their concerns and recommendations in a constructive manner, and to assure staff and managers that their comments will be considered in program redesign.

### Comprehensive Planning

Winnebago County Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Process. (2003)  
The Winnebago County Planning Office had been trying for ten years to get a county-wide comprehensive plan adopted, without success. Two or three attempts had resulted in being voted down by the County Board with the board actually instituting a moratorium on any further comprehensive planning. My role was to engage extremely opposing minds and find common ground. This required visits to every township hall, village hall and city hall. It Resulted in the plan getting adopted.

### Neighborhood Planning

Capitol Neighborhoods – Mansion Hill District (Madison, WI)  
Provided facilitation and visioning consultation at the front end of the planning process for this National and Local Historic District.

Westmoreland Neighborhood (Madison, WI)  
Provided Facilitation and coaching to establish public involvement as this neighborhood prepared to submit a request to the city of Madison for funds to develop a neighborhood plan.

Community  
Service:

Founder of The Center for Community Stewardship (C4CS)  
A not-for-profit organization designed to provide support to grassroots, citizen imitated community improvement projects.

### Current Projects

Imagine  
An initiative to heat up the connectivity within the creative ecology of the Capitol region.

Tri to Change the World (TTCW)

A project designed to make triathlon participation and fundraising the same... not a difference ... one and the same thing

Dialogues on Homelessness

A neighborhood-based approach to study the complex issues of homelessness and their impact; Identify and implement strategies for meaningful community dialogue, outreach and education; and Build capacity for coalition, collaboration and change

Madison Trust for Historic Preservation / Partners-in-the-Field  
Serving as a fundraising arm to support the funding of the organization's first-ever Executive Director, which will allow the Madison Trust to lead historic preservation activities in the city in a more organized and professional manner.

O.P.E.N (Out Professional and Executive Network)

Serving as the not-for-profit fiscal sponsor for the Out professional & Executive network which connects and creates LGBT leaders by actively engaging in professional development, education, public service, networking and presenting extraordinary social events.

Sarah White – Author

Serving as the fiscal sponsor for this individual Communicator – Book Developer – Life Storyteller to train others writing their stories; Individuals, families, businesses, and communities: books, articles, online content, life histories