

# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

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## Summary

This fact sheet explains how celebrating success is an important part of Indigenous community planning. Celebrating success helps you reflect on how far you have come, enjoy the present and build excitement for the future.

**Keywords:** community engagement, communication tools, reporting back, managing the process, planning team

## What Is Celebrating Success?

Setting goals is a familiar step in comprehensive community planning. You brainstorm to come up with them and work hard to reach them. But what is the next step when your goals are met? Celebrate! Celebrating success means recognizing you have reached a goal and acknowledging it by doing something that makes you and others happy. Successes and their celebrations can range from small to big, and can be different for every person. Most of us already know how to identify and celebrate success.<sup>1</sup> We give medals for first place and plan parties for high school graduations. Celebrations might be less familiar in the context of comprehensive community planning, but they are no less important.<sup>2</sup>

For more information on setting goals, see the *Setting Goals and Objectives* fact sheet.

## Why Celebrate Success?

Creating a comprehensive community plan is a big job that can take years to finish. Over time it is easy to lose interest, forget your original goals and feel like you are not moving forward. The challenges are large and make it easy to forget about the many things you have completed. The day-to-day work behind the project may be challenging. The community can feel like they are not being included. With the finish line so far away, doubt can creep in, leaving people wondering if the plan will ever be done.<sup>3</sup>

Celebrating success is an excellent way to stay on track, keep people interested and see how far you have come.<sup>4</sup> Instead of worrying about how much work is left, it reminds you to pause and enjoy your successes. Celebration helps your planning team stay motivated and gives them the confidence to keep going, knowing that their past efforts are valued. Whether you are a team leader or a team member, taking the time to celebrate success can make a big impact. It is a positive boost, making your planning team feel good about their hard work and inspired to continue.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 1** | Celebrating success is an important part of the planning process, helping to keep people feeling positive and motivated.  
Source (LoraxGirl. "CELEBRATE!" Digital image. Flickr. July 12, 2014. Accessed January 29, 2019. <https://www.flickr.com/>) CC BY-NC 2.0.

Celebrating success is also a great way to engage with your community. You can share your progress, get feedback about your work and excite people about the future of the plan.<sup>6</sup> It lets everyone know where you are in the planning process and makes sure they feel involved, from beginning to end. This creates a transparent planning process and builds trust, so people are more willing to be a part of the process.<sup>7</sup>

For more information on transparency, see the *Promoting Transparency and Accountability* fact sheet.

Celebrating with the community is also a chance to interact with people who might not normally take part in the planning process.<sup>8</sup> Going to a formal meeting or filling out a survey might not attract a big crowd, but who would not want to attend a fun event like a community feast? Take the time to get feedback from people who have not yet been a part of the planning process and encourage them to join your events in the future. Everyone in the community should have the chance to contribute to the plan.<sup>9</sup>

## When to Celebrate Success?

There is no right or wrong time to celebrate. You need to find what works best to keep your planning process motivated. Remember that no success is too small and you can never celebrate too often – happy people do better work!<sup>10</sup> It is just a matter of having the right type of celebration for the type of success. While some successes are easy to recognize and celebrate, there are many times when we miss the chance. To help know when to celebrate success, it is useful to think of small, medium and large successes.

### Small Successes

It can be hard to know when to celebrate a small success. They happen on a daily basis and we often do not even notice them, thinking they are just “part of the job”. But it is the little everyday tasks that slowly add up to big results. No large success would be possible without the many small successes you achieve every day!<sup>11</sup>

*“There is no right or wrong time to celebrate, you need to find what works best to keep your planning process motivated.”*

A small success could be finishing a poster or having people attend your meeting. A poster might be a quick project, but it can have a big impact when your message reaches the entire community. Meeting attendance might be partly out of your control, so it is extra exciting when people make the choice to attend.<sup>12</sup> Celebrating these small successes helps your planning team get excited about their work and see how their everyday efforts add to the final result.

## SMART Goals

Consider setting daily SMART goals to help you recognize your small successes. You may already be familiar with this type of goal:

**SPECIFIC → SMALL**

**MEASURABLE**

**ATTAINABLE**

**REALISTIC**

**TIMELY**

By changing specific to small, you can set goals that can be reached within a day, becoming a small success to be celebrated.<sup>1</sup>

## Medium Successes

Medium successes are easier to recognize. They may have taken weeks or even months to finish and probably more than one person worked on them. There may have been many small successes that led to a medium success being reached, but that should not take away from celebrating the medium success. Finishing a quarterly report could be a medium success. It took many people and small success to complete and is a great way to see how far you have come.

## Large Successes

It is easiest to know when a large success has been reached. It is a major milestone, a big goal that many people have worked towards for a long time – maybe even years! You feel proud of your hard work and want to congratulate the people who helped get you there. Do not let that feeling pass! Celebrate your large success and let those good feelings carry you through the next phase of the planning process.

## Who to Celebrate Success with?

Who to celebrate with depends on the success – small or medium or large – and who you want to celebrate with. Small successes are often projects that your planning team can celebrate internally. A finished poster could be celebrated by just the team leader and team member, while a completed presentation could be celebrated by the entire planning team.<sup>14</sup> Medium successes can be celebrated by just the planning team, but could also include other key people who helped make the success possible. This could be community leaders or individuals who went out of their way to help the planning process. Large successes should be celebrated by the entire community.<sup>15</sup> It is a time for everyone who worked on the plan, contributed to the plan and will be impacted by the plan to gather and recognize the progress that has been made.

## How Do You Celebrate Success?

Celebrations can range from small to large, matching the size of the success they are for. A handshake, round of applause or personal note could all be used to celebrate a small success. A poster, cookies or a website update could be used to celebrate a medium success.<sup>16</sup> Annual events, like community feasts or a tipi raising could be used to celebrate large successes.<sup>17</sup> What is most important is finding a type of celebration that is enjoyable and motivating for your planning

team and community. It is a time to gather and recognize the progress that you have made.

## Final Thoughts

Celebrating success is an important step in the planning process. Celebrating successes regularly creates an excited planning team and engaged community that are eager to work together to create a brighter future for your community.

### Further Reading

**CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning in British Columbia** by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

[https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb2013\\_1378922610124\\_eng.pdf](https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb2013_1378922610124_eng.pdf)

**Moving Towards a Stronger Future: An Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development** by Little Black Bear & Associates

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mvng-twrd-strngr-ftr/mvng-twrd-strngr-ftr-en.pdf>

These books both provide suggestions on when and how to celebrate your community's planning successes.

### Endnotes

- 1 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.79.
- 2 Babalos, K., & Williams, J. "Comprehensive community planning: learning from practice with the Haida Village of Skidegate," (graduating project) University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2013 July 31, Accessed November 4, 2018, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/graduateresearch/310/items/1.0075781/>. p. 88.  
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- 3 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.78.
- 4 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.78.
- 5 Witty, David R. "Professional Practice Manual," Canadian Institute of Planners, 2002 March, Accessed November 4, 2018, <http://municipalcapacity.ca/+pub/document/resource-materials/planmanual.pdf>. p. 74.
- 6 Gallagher, Stephen. "Intergovernmental community planning: The Sliammon First Nation and City of Powell River experience," Plan Canada 48, no.2 (2008), p.35-38. <http://www.cip-icu.ca/Files/Plan-Canada/plan-canada-issues/Plan-Canada-Vol-48-No-2-Summer-ete-2008.aspx>. p. 37.  
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Squiala First Nation, 2013.
- 7 Gallagher, 2008, p. 37.  
INAC, 2016, p. 62.
- 8 Wates, Nick, ed. The Community Planning Handbook: How people can shape their cities, towns and villages in any part of the world. (London: Earthscan, 2000), p. 30.
- 9 INAC, 2016, p. 2.
- 10 Squiala First Nation, 2013.
- 11 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.78.
- 12 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.78-79.
- 13 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.79.
- 14 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.79.
- 15 INAC, 2016, p. 62.
- 16 Little Black Bear & Associates, 2011, p.79.
- 17 INAC, 2016, p. 62.