

An analysis by George McNaughtan

STAKEHOLDERS



THE PROFILE

Section 1: The Identity

When it comes to the question of who I thought I should choose for the stakeholder who I was going to focus on, I had a few options. I thought that the Blanding City Council, and Blanding's mayor would both be good choices, but the option that I thought would be best suited to solve the problem would be the Voters of Blanding. They are adult residents that can participate in a hypothetical referendum. The people in Blanding that consistently turn out to vote in a situation like this. These are the people whose opinions need to be swayed, because even if the City Council decides to initiate the process, the vote is what really counts. They hold the direct power to approve or reject changes to Blanding's dry-town status. Their opinions may vary individual to individual, because each person may have a personal background that changes what they think of the matter. Blanding has a largely LDS demographic, which could prove difficult to overcome, as alcohol is against the religion's ideals.

Section 2: Values/Motivation

Blanding voters could be motivated by many different things and have many different values. However, for the most part, they will all want public safety, better economics, and whatever aligns with their own family values. Some want a quiet, orderly town. Some concerns that they may have with lifting a ban on alcohol would be increased fear of drunk driving, increased crime, domestic abuse, and a general bad influence on the youth. These are all valid concerns. They may care more about what the people of the town believe rather than what any outsiders may care about. In the same breath, economic stability also is important. Voters may want to keep more people in the town, keep money in the town, via tourists, and help feed the youth and the public. Rising costs, job opportunities that are being missed out on, and lack of dining options are going to be things that negatively impact the voters and things they will care about. As mentioned above, a large percentage of the town is LDS. This has a great impact on their values and opinions about the situation. The voters of the town really do want to improve the welfare of the town, but also want to ensure that it stays with the old town vibes that they love. Some residents are passionate about the topic, and some don't care at all. One resident is on record of saying "If I lived in Blanding I would do everything in my power to keep alcohol sales out of city limits."

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Section 3: The Rhetorical Barrier

The primary barrier preventing voters from wanting a change in Blanding's dry-town status is the fear of unintended consequences. Many think that allowing alcohol sales will inevitably lead to many bad things. These things could include increased crime, public disorder -- just to name a few. Some others simply don't see the issue as being urgent. They view tourism and economic limitations as inconveniences rather than serious threats. This may come without the knowledge of the food insecurity problem in Blanding. There is skepticism towards economic arguments, people don't want tourists to be prioritized over the actual residents. Some think that it would be a step in the wrong direction, and it wouldn't be regulated as tightly as it is supposed to be. When voters are unsure, they simply default to sticking with how it is. The risk to reward ratio simply isn't there for the voters, so that is the barrier between the voters and change.

Section 4: The Strategy

If you want to persuade Blanding voters, the most effective rhetorical strategy is going to have to be Pathos supported by Logos. Emotional stories are going to be the main thing that can grab attention of the average local. Stories that you could find evidence of, like families struggling to find affordable food options, maybe young people leaving the town in droves due to the lack of opportunity, and importantly businesses struggling to survive and compete. People simply don't want to make food businesses here because the profit to cost ratio is so high it would be a bad investment to make a dining establishment in Blanding when you could use unsaturated markets elsewhere that will allow you to profit more. Therefore, there is less money in town, less places to eat, and overall creates a negative impact on the town that people might struggle to see behind the smokescreens of religious ideals and perceived threat to the safety of the community. This can make the voters that are impartial realize that it actually affects them in a very real way. Logos strengthens this because then they can see hard evidence that backs up evidence that limited, but present, alcohol sales can increase revenue without increasing crime. Voters need to have the security that change can happen without being a totally groundbreaking bad thing. If they can come to that conclusion, then we will be able to change their minds.