

"Graduating" the Social License to Operate

Energy literacy, 'Learner's
Permits' and the "licensing" process

Synergy Alberta Conference 2012

Red Deer

Today's discussion...

- **Social licensing**
 - Problems with the present
- **Graduated licensing**
 - Levelling the balance
- **Energy literacy**
 - Policy perspective gaining momentum
- **Synergy's role: personally, professionally & corporately**
 - Make it an energy literacy conference

Defining “synergy” and meaning

- **Beating the meaning out of words and phrases:**
 - **Paradigm shift**
 - **Sustainability**
 - **Synergy**
 - **Social licence**
 - **Energy literacy**

What's so "*social*" about the license?

- **Platitudes and put-ons...still often distant from principle underpinnings...almost *anti-social***
 - For many companies, concept still embedded in a regulatory context; thus a “letter-of-the-law” versus “spirit-of-the-law” dynamic prevails
 - Regulatory contexts outpaced by social expectations, realities – and entitlements
 - Compromise often stands in for consensus
- ***Imbued* with meaning...or *bereft* of meaning?**

Thinking about licensing....

- **Not a state-of-being, but an iterative process:**
 - **Knowledge standards**
 - Passive, active & shifting
 - **Convention standards**
 - Social consensus
 - Legal enforcement
 - **“Failure” requirements and standards**
 - **Example: rules of the road a compact between drivers, society and government – involving responsibility on both sides**

Problems with the social license

- Typically an imbalance of expectations
 - Often a “victim’s/martyr’s” onus (by companies)
 - Often an “ignorance” onus (by stakeholders)
 - Often a failure to invest adequately (by either side)
- Regulators can “get it wrong” (typically timing)
- Typically an imbalance of “knowledges”
- Media can fan flames of antagonism
- Such imbalances lead to the Triple A “whammy”
 - Adversity, acrimony and animus...

Think about our major “debates”

- Analyse them based on knowledge differences and deficiencies:
 - Northern Gateway
 - Multi-stage hydraulic fracturing
 - Oilsands impact: air, water, land
- Duelling “facts” & duelling “perspectives”
- Without literacy “balances”, we cannot hope to have dialogue that advances

Polarization of perspectives

Prophets without honour

or

Profits without honour

But what if there was a process?

- That taught, tested and re-tested?
- That defined new baselines of knowledge for energy producers and energy consumers?
- That had has explicit principles a balanced approach to discussion?
- That was the pre-cursor to major projects, policies and processes?

Communicative license to participate

- **Concept of a graduated system prevails**
 - Process-driven in terms of goals, timelines
 - Both “parties” agree to baseline knowledge and awareness conventions
 - Third-party roles key as neutral facilitators & testers
- **Result is:**
 - Consensus-orientation
 - More balanced, rational and respectful discourse
 - More *dialectic* than *debate*

Dialectic versus debate...

- **Dialectic**
 - Any systematic reasoning, exposition, or argument that juxtaposes opposed or contradictory ideas and usually seeks to resolve their conflict.
 - Premise of “win-win”
- **Debate**
 - A formal **contest** in which the affirmative and negative sides of a proposition are advocated by **opposing** speakers.
 - Premise of a winner...and a loser

Energy literacy and licensing...

- The notion of licensing “energy literacy”
- License must be earned...and maintained
- Yet no defined “mechanism” or “process” exists to “test”
- Potential perils of energy literacy efforts:
 - Cost requirements
 - Admission of vulnerabilities
 - Egos at the door
 - Time constraints via process
 - No lifetime guarantees

Interesting times for literacy....

- **Government of Alberta**
 - Driving toward a national energy strategy
- **Council of the Federation**
 - Relations between the provinces, Ottawa
- **Government of Canada**
 - Senate Committee of Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources
 - Now or Never Report
- **Canadian Council of Chief Executives**
 - First Nations as true partner in development

Defining “literacy”

- Not like “*reading, writing and arithmetic...*”
- Nailing down some baselines....
 - Economic
 - Technology
 - Numeracy
 - Energy policy and energy politics
 - Environment
 - Demand & consumption
 - Beyond oil & gas

Synergy as literacy testing grounds

- Synergy groups are in fact literacy “*petri dishes*”
- Often, key advancements made regionally are based on heightened literacy.
- Synergy groups at their core illuminate and illustrate the power of literacy in action.

Synergy groups: What can you do?

- **Companies, individuals & communities:**
 - Track, journalize and record learnings
 - Track and record measurable results of interaction
 - Specific projects and processes
 - Define your communities “deficiencies”
- **Seek out the cap rock in your organizational lives**
 - ...that which blocks “reservoir” knowledge flow
- **Create “permeability” through which knowledge and literacy can flow – internally and externally**

From this conference...

- Draft a communicative license to participate
- Defining what your friends say:
 - Ask yourself the 10 things you're consistently explaining to your friends and family...
- Defining your role:
 - Ask yourself the 10 things you've always wanted to know about energy...but don't!
- Defining your company's and community role:
 - Ask yourself the 10 things your company doesn't do well in terms of energy knowledge teaching

Looking ahead to spring...

- **Next energy literacy conference March 17-19**
- **Will seek to define:**
 - **How better to share leading practices**
 - **Identifying and classifying those practices**
 - **Find ways and means to recognize and promote those leading practices**
 - **Determining how best to advocate and lead in the “energy literacy” space**

Adding to our literacy lexicon...

- **You've heard of synbit and dilbit:**
 - Used to reduce the viscosity of bitumen during pipeline transmission
- **You've h**
What do you get when you fuse a synergy group with energy literacy creation?
 - Synergistic catalyst of on-the-ground synergy group intelligence, defining literacy in everyday, practical terms

Hence....

SynLit!