The Ladder of Citizen Participation

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1. Steps on the ladder

   delegate
   negotiate
   consult meaningfully
   consult pro forma
   inform early
   inform late
   act secretly

2. “Rules” for the ladder

   a. Stay as low on the ladder as you can. Climb it only when you need input or you want to prevent or reduce outrage.
   b. When in doubt, climb the ladder.
   c. Don’t worry about participation creating conflict that wasn’t already there.
   d. Don’t promise more than you can deliver – and keep delivering.
   e. Remember that participation takes up-front time (and some money).
   f. Don’t use your inability to be at the top of the ladder as an excuse for staying at the bottom.
   g. If you are responding to public input, trumpet it – don’t hide it.
   h. Be as provisional as you can.


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