



Communicating for Effective Stakeholder Engagement: Lessons Learned in the Mid-Atlantic

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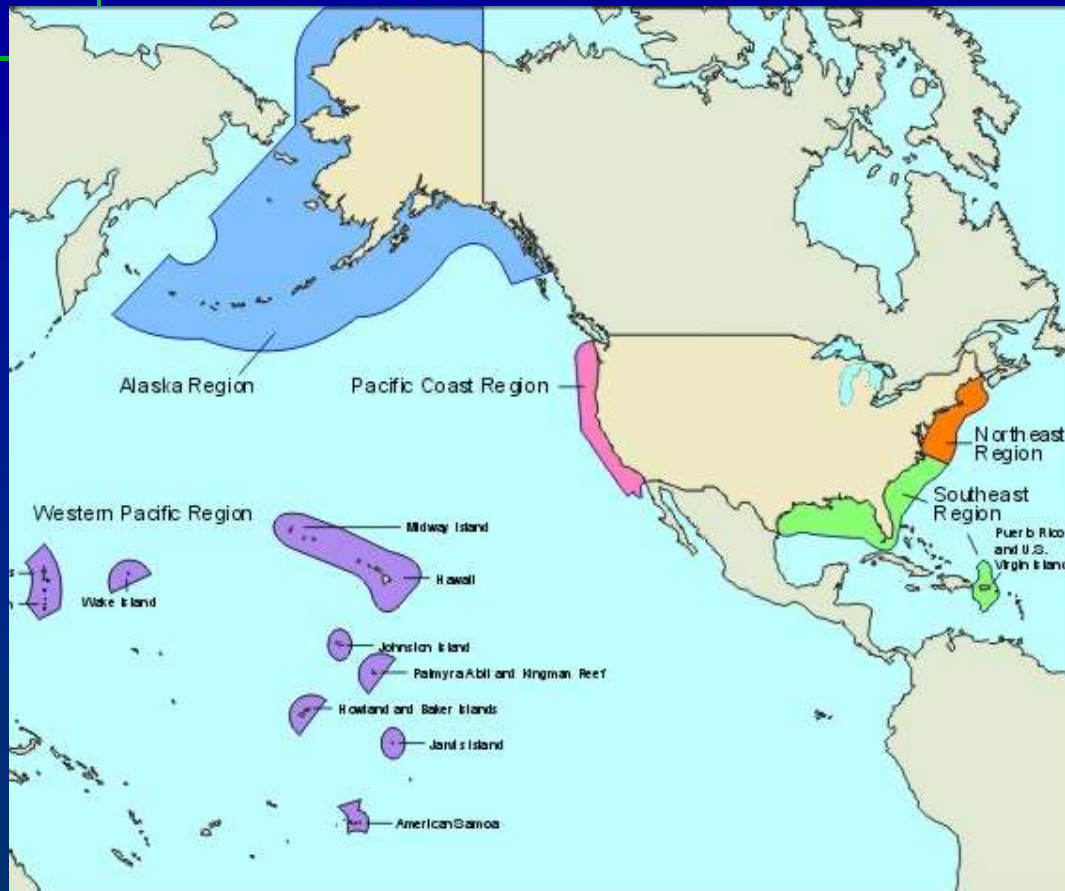
**"The most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers.
The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong questions."**

-Peter Drucker

Overview

- Background
- Communication challenges in fisheries management
- Visioning and strategic planning: communication methods
- Lessons Learned

Regional Fishery Management Councils



10 National Standards

**Prevent
overfishing
while achieving
optimum yield**

**Best available
science**

**Manage stocks
as a unit**

**Be fair and
equitable**

Efficiency

**Consider
variations
among fisheries**

**Avoid
redundancy**

**Minimize
adverse
social/economic
impacts**

**Minimize
bycatch**

**Consider safety
of human lives**

Mid-Atlantic Fisheries

Commercial (2011)

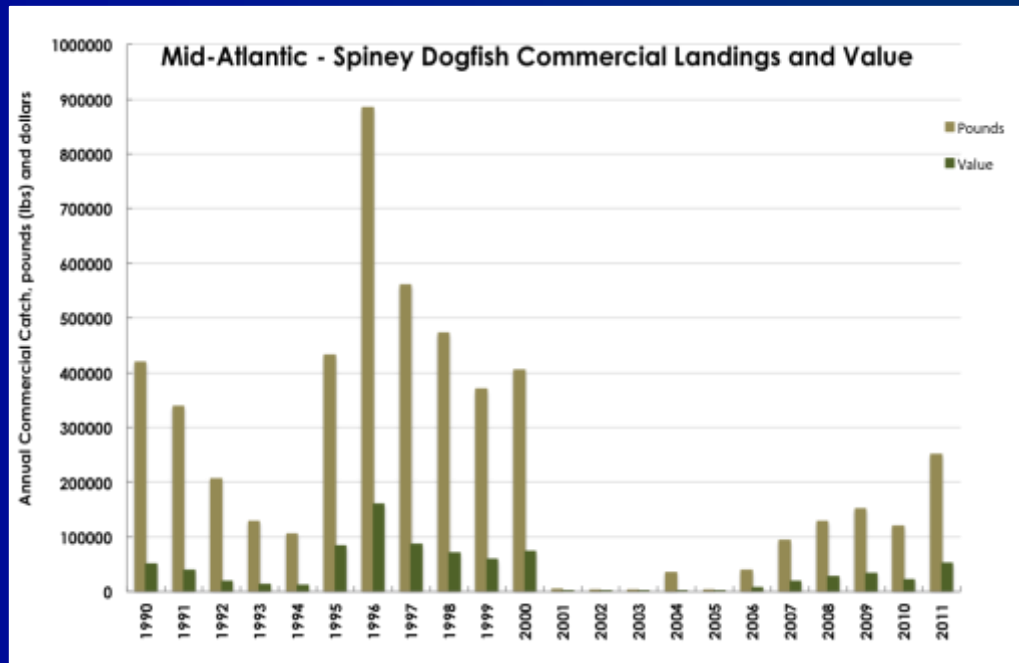
- 780 million pounds
- \$527 million (54% increase from 2002)
- 37,000 jobs

Recreational (2011)

- 2.4 million anglers
- 16 million fishing trips
- 25,000 jobs

Rebuilding History

- 1980s-early 1990s: overfishing
- Late 1990s through 2000s: rebuilding
- Social and economic consequences of rebuilding



Communication Challenges

- Complex nature of information
- Distrust
- Lack of respect
- Lack of clarity about roles and jurisdictions
- Expectations
- Perceptions of inaccessibility

Visioning and Strategic Planning

Objective: Develop a stakeholder-defined vision and strategic plan for Mid-Atlantic fisheries

How will we measure our success?

Data Collection Methods

Online Surveys

General

1,253
responses

Fishery-specific

1,048
responses



Position Letters

12
Letters

Lessons Learned



Commercial Industry

What Worked

- Targeting “key contacts” (processors, association leaders, industry advisors)
- Face-to-face interactions (port meetings)
- Leadership attendance at port meetings
- Flexibility
- Acknowledging failures/shortcomings
- Question & answer

Commercial Industry

What Didn't Work

- Surveys
- Permit-holder letter
- The interview question: "What is the Council doing well?"

Recreational Community

What worked

- Combination of methods: surveys and focus groups
- Club outreach
- Forums/message boards
- Question & Answer

Stakeholder Input: Communication Themes



#1

Listen

“It’s going to be a difficult thing to have us back at the table and win back trust... You have to listen to us when we say something, you cannot just disregard us.”



#2

Respect

“If you don’t have a briefcase, you are not listened to.”



#3

Establish Feedback Loops

“The Councils need to say, ‘this is what we heard you say, this is what we are doing, and this is why.’ You see all these people providing this input, and they don’t see any actions. Actions resulting from our input are precious.”



#4

Create the right opportunities for effective participation

“You need a process where fishermen can give input at the right point in the process. You hold these types of meetings and present information in conjunction with the science information before you make a recommendation.”



#5

Pay attention to issues that are “not your responsibility”

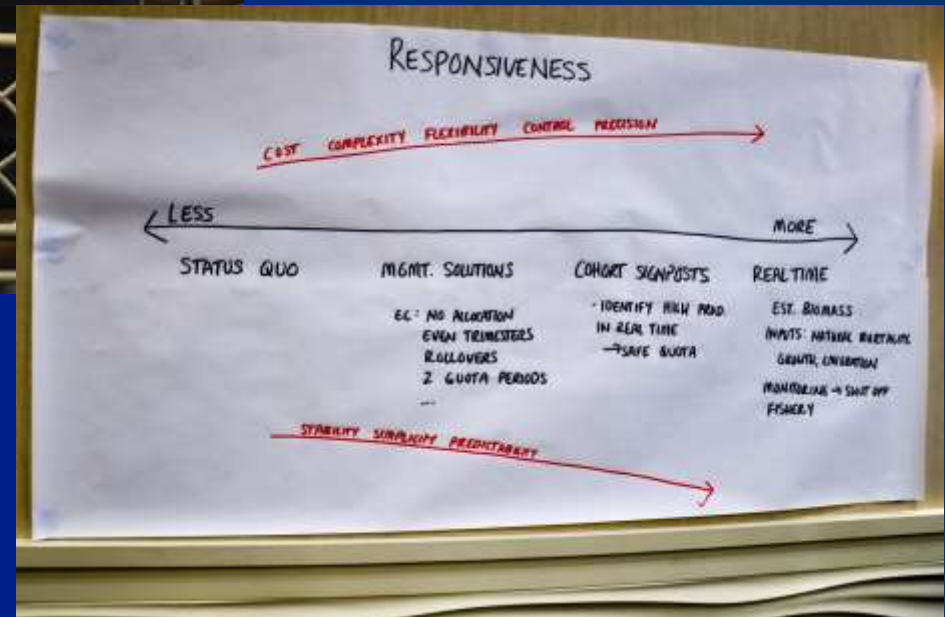
“The restaurants want to buy consistency and lower prices; they won’t buy a whole fish from me. So you need to get the public to buy the local fish, which is the plus side that will keep us fishing in the long term.”



Council Actions

- Council member name badges
- Replaced standing microphone for public comment with seat at the table
- Listening sessions
- Advisory panel fishery performance reports

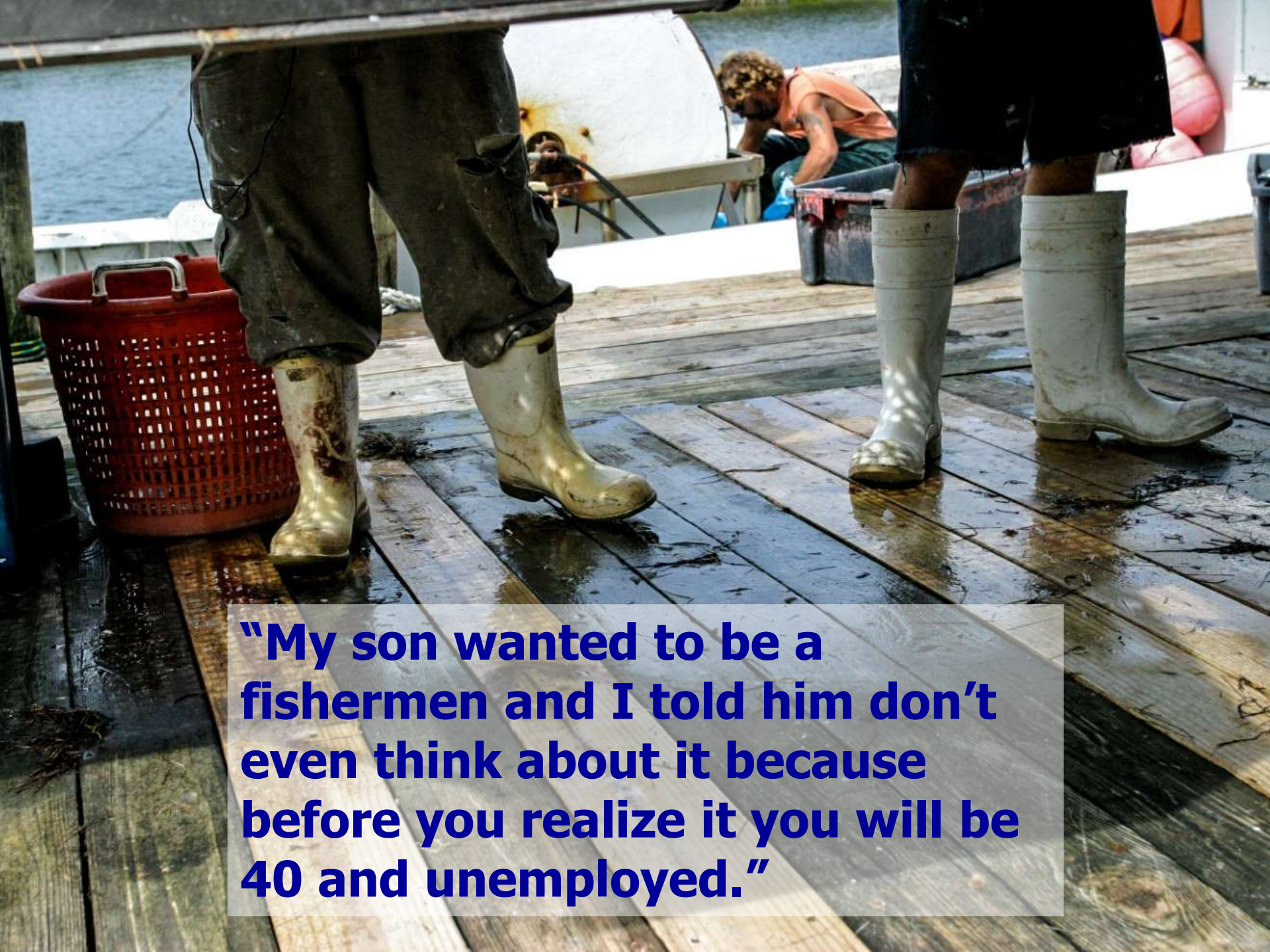
2013 Squid Workshop



Looking Toward the Future



“We won’t be here in 5 years if things don’t change. There is no one behind us. We are the last people. We love what we do. Who is going to buy our boats?”



“My son wanted to be a fisherman and I told him don’t even think about it because before you realize it you will be 40 and unemployed.”

