

COMMUNITY COMMENT  
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2017

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

I know that Donald Trump's style has been studied from every angle on every media outlet. I'm still going to give you my own insight into that situation. This is not about Trump's policies, it's about the way he goes about his business in Washington.

I lived in both Washington, D.C. and New York City for a total of 20 years—almost evenly spread between the two.

My first job in DC was at the Kennedy Center in the Press Office. It's where I learned most of what I know today.

Washington runs on relationships. It's about finesse, it's about cultivating professional friendships and understanding that events are never "one and done." You will inevitably face the same people again, probably sooner rather than later.

A few times a year, we would have an "out of town tryout" at the Kennedy Center. Meaning producers were working on the show outside of New York before taking it to Broadway. That way they could tweak it and refine it based on audience reactions before opening it to the New York press.

Without fail, a New York press agent would breeze in to town on the shuttle, look at the press we had lined up, and insist we get at least one more story in the newspaper, even if that meant playing hardball with the Washington Post.

We usually nodded our heads in agreement, and then wisely let it alone. We knew that insisting a writer do a particular story was a bad move—because we had to come back to that same writer in two weeks

for another story for a different show. The New Yorkers didn't see that our good relationships were a bonus for their show. We knew the press, we talked to them practically every day on the phone, we knew the pecking order and how to seat them accordingly on press night.

We also knew that when a Senator or Cabinet member called for theater tickets, we scrambled to find them the best seats in the house.

Fast forward nine years to a DC press agent—me—working my first week in a Broadway press office. I was taking an hour for lunch every day—we used that time in DC to have lunch with other PR people and creating useful relationships.

In a couple of days it dawned on me that A—there was no one to have lunch with because no one took lunches in New York, and B—no one else in my office was taking lunches—they ordered lunch, had it delivered and ate at their desk.

And when a Senator or Cabinet member called for House Seats to a hot show—you tossed that message in the garbage. They meant nothing in New York.

Time Magazine wrote a piece in the 80s about the difference between working in DC and working in New York. In DC, it's who you work for; in New York, it's how much money you make. In DC, it's diplomacy; in New York, it's about immediate results. I think you get the picture.

It's no wonder President Trump is struggling in DC, he's a no lunch guy in a go-to-lunch town.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.