

Select Amenities

   

   

- DEPARTMENTS
- NEWS
 - SPORTS
 - BUSINESS
 - LIVING
 - OPINION
 - KENTUCKY
 - WEATHER LINKS

- RESOURCES
- Subscribe
 - Contact Us
 - Search
 - Back Issues
 - The Post Store

- U.S. & WORLD
- A.P. Top Stories
 - A.P. In Depth

- SCRIPPS LINKS
- Do It Yourself
 - Fine Living
 - Food Network
 - Home & Garden

- DAILY FIX
- Weather
 - Traffic
 - Talk, Cincinnati
 - Giveaways
 - Horoscopes
 - Lottery Numbers
 - Comics
 - Crosswords
 - Stahler

- SPORTS
- Bengals
 - Reds
 - Golf Guide
 - Hockey

- ENTERTAINMENT
- Movies
 - Dining
 - Menus
 - Local Events
 - Video Games

- CLASSIFIEDS
- Jobs
 - Cars
 - Homes
 - General

City told to talk more to residents

By Kevin Osborne
Post staff reporter

An internationally known management consultant believes Cincinnatians can more effectively improve their city by listening less to consultants and designated leaders, and talking more with their neighbors.

Peter Block touted the power of dialogue and frank conversation as a crucial first step to creating a healthy community and addressing chronic local problems like strained race relations.

Successful efforts require an emphasis on boosting the civic involvement of residents and relying less on those in leadership positions to offer remedies, he added.

Reliance on corporate leaders and elected officials creates a false sense of security for people, which accomplishes little while fostering a sense of entitlement among the public.

"Citizens want safety, they want someone to take care of them," Block said. "Campaigns make promises that are unfillable. In those (types of) conversations, there is an escape from freedom.

"To have an action plan doesn't change the world," he continued. "Someone has to act on the plan, someone has to embrace it."

Block -- who has worked with organizations ranging from Chiquita to the New York Times to the Union Institute -- spoke Tuesday night to the Cincinnati Association at downtown's University Club.

As Cincinnatians tries to refocus its mission to become more active locally, Block drew upon his expertise in helping organizations and communities change their views about service and accountability.

The outlook -- which combines equal doses of philosophy, psychology and activism -- is detailed in various best-selling books like "Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used" and "The Empowered Manager: Positive Political Skills at Work."

"Commitment is about what promise I'm willing to make, with no expectation of return," Block told the crowd.

"What's the price I'm willing to pay for the future I imagine?"

Block, who quietly moved to town four years ago, has been taking a higher public profile in recent months, offering his services free of charge to various civic organizations.

In recent weeks, Block has consulted with several local groups including the Urbanists and Leadership Cincinnati.



Post Features



Contact Us

[Editor of The Cincinnati Post](#)

[Editor of The Kentucky Post](#)

[Webmaster](#)

[Sports Editor](#)

[Living Editor](#)

[Business Editor](#)

[Metro Editor](#)

[Kentucky Post City Editor](#)

LATEST NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- [Mass. High Court Rules for Gay Marriage](#)
- [Bush Backs More Time for 9/11 Panel Report](#)
- [Rivals Storm the South After Kerry's Wins](#)
- [CDC Confirms Powder in Capitol Is Ricin](#)
- [Enhanced Image of Girl's Abduction Sought](#)
- [Bush Faces Dilemma in Iraq Intel Panel](#)

The Queen City has much promise, Block said, but "in some ways has lost faith in itself."

Too often, the city seeks structural solutions to more deeply rooted problems. Instead, people should focus on building relationships, particularly with segments who feel alienated.

"We had a strong city manager, now we have a strong mayor, as if that will make a difference," Block said. "This city isn't suffering from a lack of structure. I don't know that it's suffering from a lack of leadership.

"We want to elevate the level of informed debate," he added.

Block's musings elicited a mixed reaction from Tuesday night's crowd.

"It's a good thing to shake us up and make us think about what we're doing and why we're doing it," said Jane Anderson, a University of Cincinnati political science professor who is a Cincinnati member.

"When you talk about engaging other people, it can be the most damnedest hard thing in the world to do if they've been discounted in the past," Anderson said. "I think it's the essential problem in this community."

But another Cincinnati member, Hamilton County Auditor Dusty Rhodes, was more skeptical.

"The only citizen participation that honest to God matters happens on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November," Rhodes said. "We ought to concentrate on getting more people to the polls on Election Day.

"To have a 30 percent turnout is a shame," he added.

"Voting is the least we can do," Block replied. "I would take low voting as a symptom."

Although critics sometimes deride Block's message as elliptical and esoteric, he counters that its basics are simple: People must become more engaged, deciding for themselves what change or action they want to create around them.

"Twenty percent of the people, if they decide to do something, everything begins to change," Block said.

"You don't need everyone on board."

- [Report Criticizes Guards in Geoghan Death](#)
- [Mars Rover's Work Delayed Over Glitch](#)
- [Oregonians Soundly Defeat Tax Increase](#)
- [Fla. Boy Charged With Murder of Classmate](#)
- [Arafat Aide Accuses U.S. of 'Blackmail'](#)
- [Death Toll Reaches 26 in Turkey Collapse](#)
- [Blair Defends Iraq War Despite Protests](#)
- [France Debates Ban on Islamic Headwear](#)
- [Pakistan Nuke Scientist Asks Forgiveness](#)
- [Experts Worry Terrorists Have Nuke Plans](#)
- [Tyco Defense Asks for Dismissal of Charge](#)
- [ETFs Not Likely to Replace Mutual Funds](#)
- [Crux of the Case Against Martha Stewart](#)
- [President of GM Europe Leaving for Dana](#)
- [Sears, Bondholders Battle Over Debt](#)

Publication Date: 11-12-2003



Search our site by keyword: 

Search also: [News](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Homes](#) | [Cars](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Obits](#) | [Coupons](#) | [Events](#) | [Dining](#) | [Movies/DVDs](#) | [Video Games](#) | [Hotels](#) | [Golf](#) | [Visitor's Guide](#) | [Maps/Directions](#) | [Yellow Pages](#)

[CINCINNATI.COM](#) | [ENQUIRER](#) | [POST](#) | [WCPO](#) | [CIN WEEKLY](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Cars](#) | [Homes](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Customer Service](#)

[Need help?](#) | [Suggestions](#) | [News tips](#) | [Letters to editors](#)
[Web advertising](#) | [Place a classified](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Circulation](#)

Copyright 2004 [The Cincinnati Post](#), an [E.W. Scripps](#) newspaper.
Use of this site signifies agreement to [terms of service](#) updated 12/19/02.

