

# Building Blocks to a Successful Broadband Operation

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**CONSORTIA**  
CONSULTING

*Here for you.*

# Mallory DeVol



# Edit Kranner



# Consortia Consulting, Inc.

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- Serving the telecom industry since 1991 – 32 years
- Headquartered in Omaha, NE with additional offices in
  - Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota
- Services
  - Financial –
    - feasibility studies, business plan, cost studies, budgets, pricing, etc.
  - Regulatory
    - Policy analysis, advocacy, federal & state regulatory compliance, reporting (BDC)
  - Managerial
    - Strategic planning, contract negotiations, succession plan, training, HR, etc.

What stage are you at in your broadband operation?



# Getting into the business

## Unique Situation

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- Task of getting the business going or setting up the expansion
- Obligations to perform the job and meet the goals that the government set for you in a short time frame.
- Fulfill regulatory and reporting requirements along the way
- You have little room for error
- Do not have the time to explore various options and learn from your own mistakes
- Have to get off to a fast start
- It is a complex industry

More  
than a  
business

## Serving a Community

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- It is not just a business, it is also a service.
- You are going to provide a very valuable and essential service to the people in your community
- You are likely to know many of them.

# How do you define Success?

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- How will you consider your business successful?
- Is it success in a financial sense or is it happy customers?
- In order to have happy customers, your business needs to be sustainable financially so you can keep providing the service to your customers.



# Simple Equation of Success

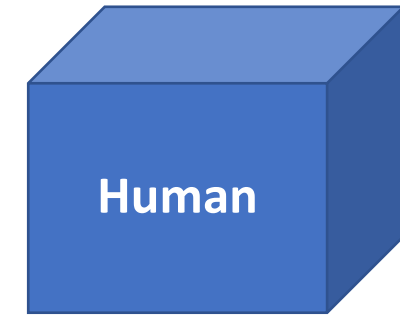
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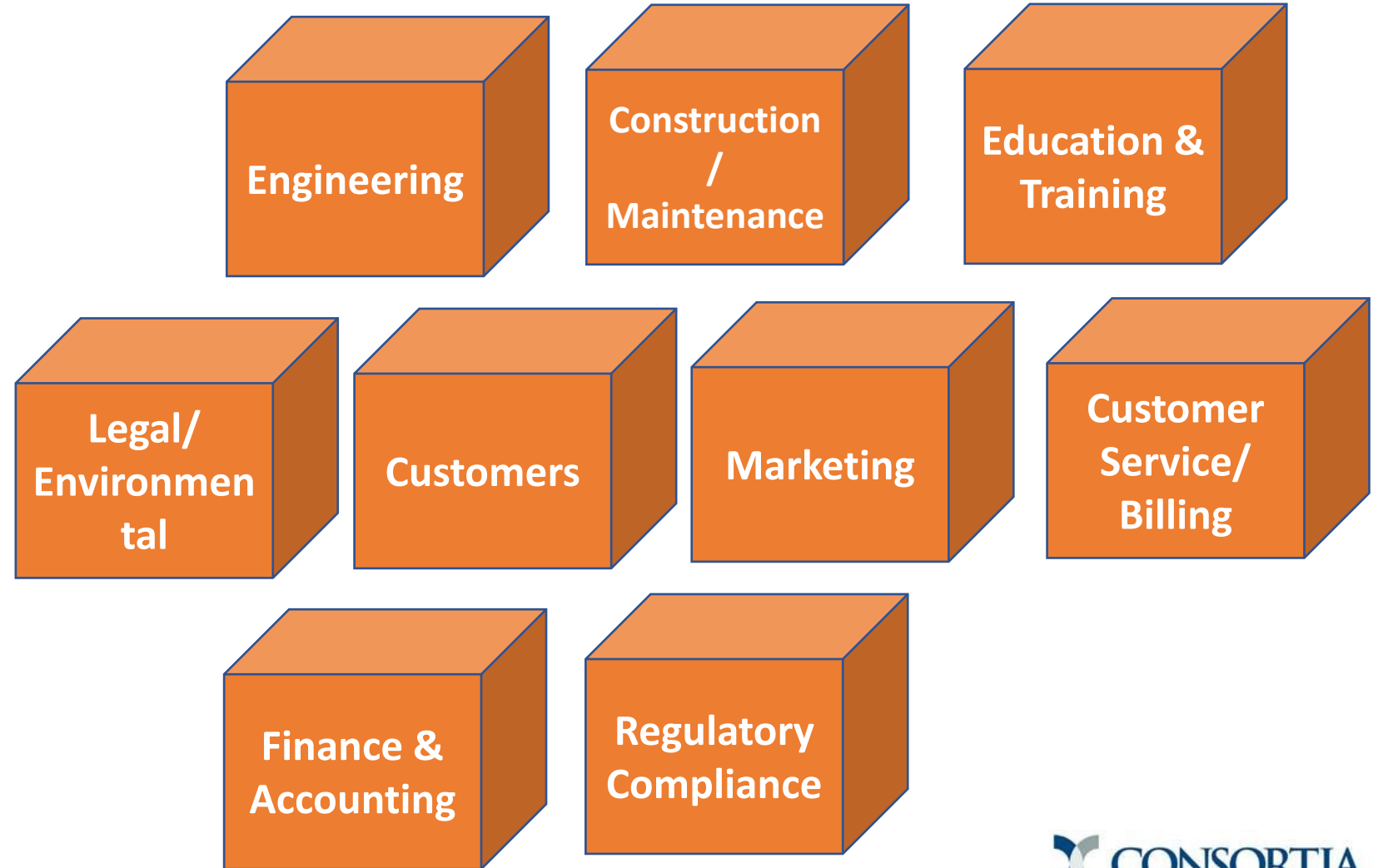


Various building blocks go into the process of running a successful business to serve your customers

## Resource Blocks



## Knowledge Blocks



# Your most important asset is your people

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- People with the right skill set are hard to find
- Most likely have to train them
- Grant requirements in hiring?
- Team building (Emergenetics, etc)
- Employee alignment with the company mission

# Who do you need?

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- Board / Council /governing body
- General Manager
- Project Manager
- Engineer (in house or engineering firm)
- Legal counsel (in house or law firm)
- Technical/ Maintenance people
- Customer service representatives/marketing
- Finance & accounting

# The Funds

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- Grants
- Long run sustainability (after grant funds are gone)
- Financial Plan
- Other government resources to assist with affordability (ACP, Lifeline, etc.)
- Revenues/ Pricing/ Competition
- After the grant money is gone, need to cover the cost of operations (payroll, insurance, etc.) and maintenance

# ACP

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- Affordable Connectivity Program
  - Tribal participants can receive up to \$75 per month
  - Up to \$100 credit for a laptop, desktop, or tablet is also available.
  - Specific requirements must be met before a household can qualify.
- Has not been renewed yet. Could run out of funding by 2024.

# Lifeline

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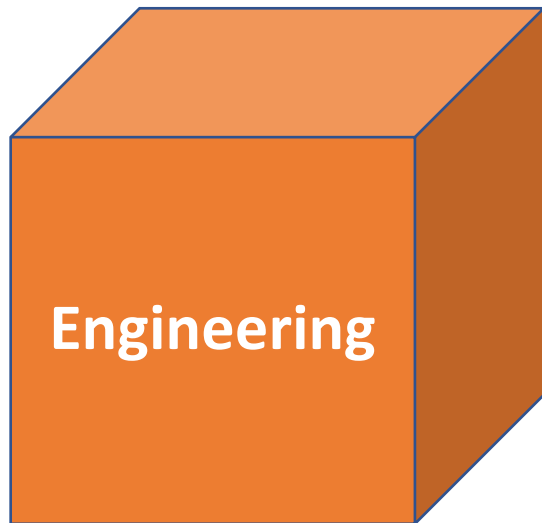


- Tribal participants can receive up to \$34.35 per month off phone, internet, or bundled services.
- Specific requirements must be met for a household to qualify.



# Engineering/ Technical knowledge

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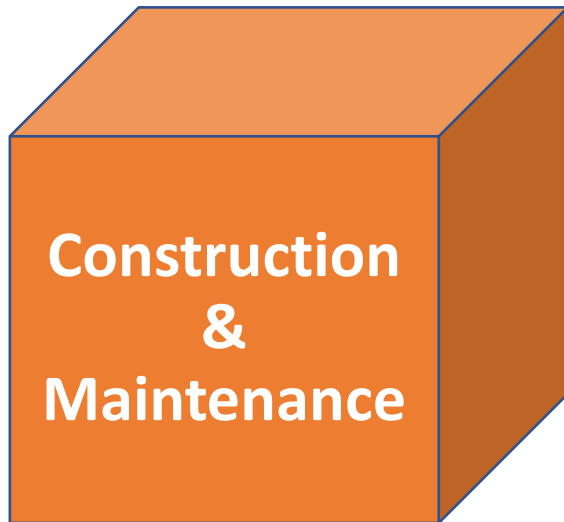


- In house or
- Contract it out to an engineering firm
  - Engineering services/knowledge will be needed even after the infrastructure is built
- Expansion, modification of the infrastructure, regulatory filing certifications
- Cybersecurity

# Construction & Maintenance

## (Technical knowledge)

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- In house construction crew or outside contractor
- Experience in building broadband infrastructure
- Hard to find available trained work
- Maintenance knowledge will be needed even after the infrastructure is built
- Availability 24/7 (after hours support)
- Likely need to send maintenance crew for training

# Training & Education

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- Acquiring initial skills
- Continuing education
- Technical
- Financial
- Industry
- Regulatory (example, CPNI)
- Customer education

# Legal & Environmental

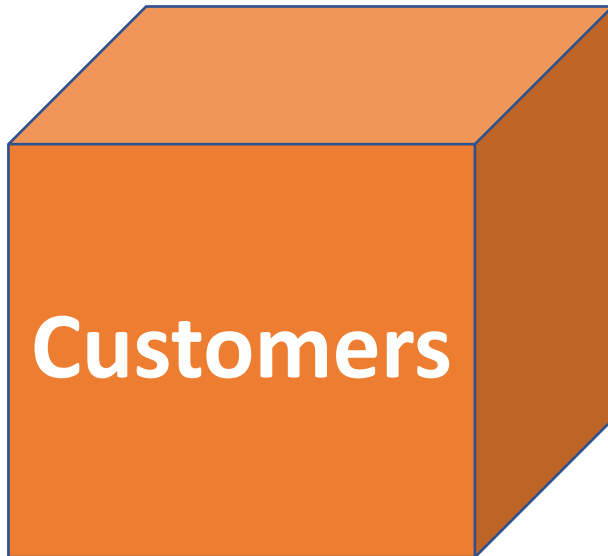
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- Telecom regulation is complex and ever changing
- Enlist a law firm with experience in the telecommunication industry
- Environmental laws & regulation in general and specific to Tribal lands

# Know Your CUSTOMERS!

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What do you know about the demographics of your potential customers?

# Know Your CUSTOMERS!

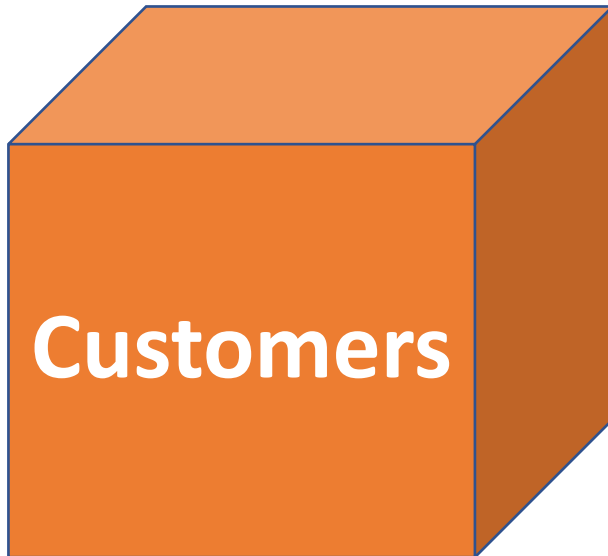
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How likely are they to  
subscribe to your services?

# Know Your CUSTOMERS!

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- Demographics
- How likely are they to subscribe to your broadband services?
- What are they likely to use the broadband services for?
  - Remote work
  - Distance learning
  - Telehealth
  - Social media
  - Shopping
  - Entertainment, etc,
- How much are they willing to pay for it?

# Ways to get to know your CUSTOMERS

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- Local knowledge
- Customer surveys
- Focus groups



# Marketing services to customers

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- Use the information you learned from
  - demographics
  - surveys
  - focus groups
- Customer education / training
- Community events

# Customer Service and Billing

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- Customer Service is a main driver of customer satisfaction
- Excellent customer service is usually one of the things that sets local providers apart from the larger, national companies
- There are rules and regulation on handling customer information (CPNI – Customer Proprietary Network Information)
- Customer service rep training

# Billing

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- Can be done in-house or using a billing vendor
- Rules on advance notices of rate changes and other requirements

# Finance and Accounting

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- Annual budgets
- Bill pay
- Accounts Receivable
- Financial reporting
- Cost studies

# Regulatory Compliance

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- The Telecom Industry is regulated heavily by the
  - Federal government
  - State governments
- Extensive reporting requirements throughout the year
- More coming, example Broadband labels

# Regulatory Compliance- Example

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- BDC – Broadband Data Collection
  - Served locations
  - Availability of service
  - Reporting twice annually
  - This data is the basis for the National Broadband Map

# Concerns/Questions

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# Thank You!

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With further questions please contact **Mallory DeVol** or **Edit Kranner** at

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