

Five years later — it's time for very special feedback!

How many times have you been asked to participate in a customer-satisfaction survey? Feedback can be as informal as restaurant servers, managers, or chefs stopping by the table to check on the meals that were served or as formal as a response answering a written survey. When the feedback process is taken seriously it can reap great rewards.

Many corporations have sophisticated quality improvement processes in place that incorporate feedback and guide everything from strategic planning to product design. Customer feedback can lead to the identification of key differentiators between an organization and the competition. It can make the difference in difficult economic times.

Some governmental organizations are even taking the approach that the citizens are their customers or shareholders (as in many corporations). Charlotte County Growth Management is putting the finishing touches on the Smart Charlotte 2050 plan (available at www.smartcharlotte2050.com). It's a comprehensive document and a blueprint for the future of the county. The process involved residents, business owners and land owners. The City of Punta Gorda continuously invites public input on a variety of planning processes. The most recent example is the parks and recreation master plan (available at www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/depts/growthmgmt/Rec&OpenSpaceMastPlan.html). The city

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invites your feedback now on this plan.

Team Punta Gorda also uses feedback as a normal step in the planning process. Our journey began with renowned urban planner Jaime Correa helping us architect the Citizens' Master Plan 2005 (available at www.teampuntagorda.org/citizens.html) for the greater Punta Gorda community. Mr. Correa helped us define what we wanted our community to become after Charley dealt his blow in 2004. We've been hard at work implementing the vision ever since, stopping at times to gather local feedback and adjust our strategic plan. We've forged strong relationships with governmental partners and many other organizations to make this a collaborative process. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and motivates us to continue the journey.

Now five years later, it's time for us to call in the grand master himself, Jaime Correa, to provide feedback of a different type. Correa will be coming to Punta Gorda to make his own assessment of our progress, the first time he has been back in since the fall of 2005.

"I still have vivid recollections of the physical destruction caused by Hurricane Charley in the City of Punta Gorda," said Correa. "My most important memories,

however, come from the resilience of a community that never gave up and worked hard to pick up the few pieces that were left standing. Everywhere I go, the Citizens' Master Plan is mentioned as an example of a community that took matters into their own hands to educate citizens and create a place of pride and honor."

On Nov. 10, we'll be taking Correa on an extensive tour of the area. Later that same day, Correa will be the keynote speaker at Team Punta Gorda's annual meeting at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. The meeting begins at 7 p.m., and the general public is invited. It's sure to be an inspiring evening! While in Punta Gorda, Correa will be hosted by the Four Points by Sheraton.

Team is honored to have been selected as the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce 2009 Non-Profit Business of the Year. If you'd like to join Team in this process contact us at team@teampuntagorda.org or 941-837-TEAM. Find more information about TEAM at www.teampuntagorda.org.