



Building the “Front Porch / Back Room” Coalition

John Chrastka, EveryLibrary

Presented on 30 April 2019

Small Libraries Big Impact Conference



Pro Bono campaign support for library leaders and communities

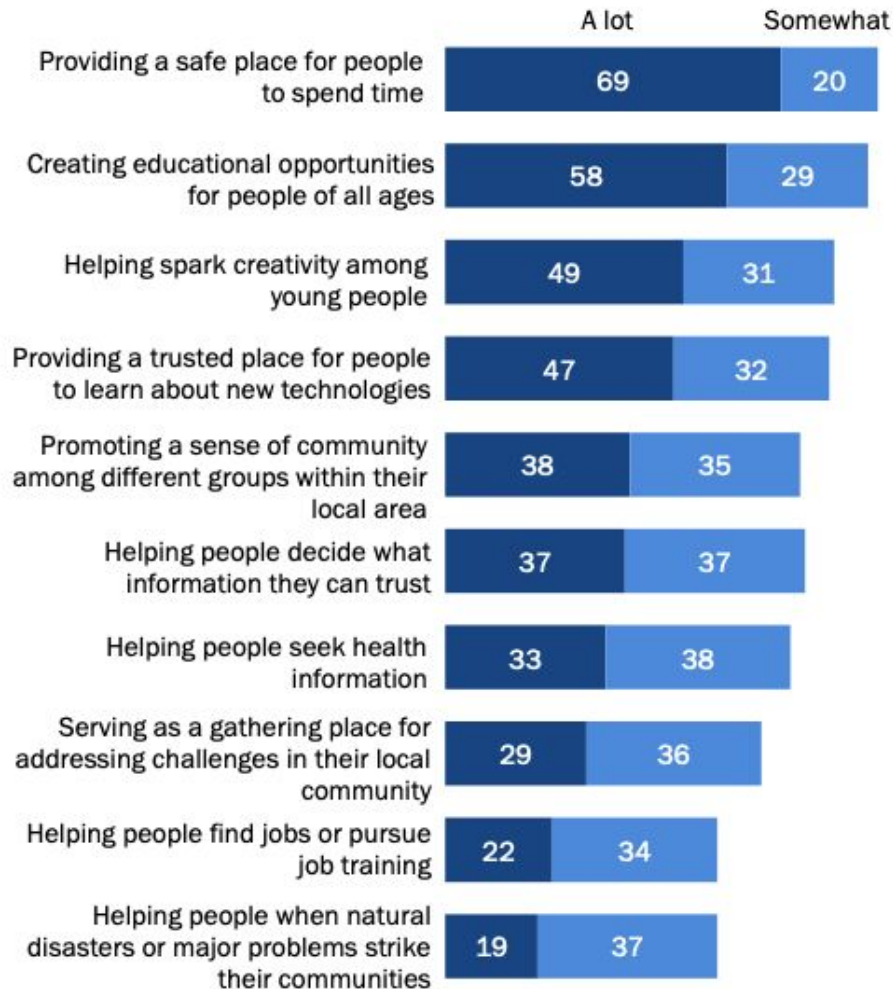
Policy and advocacy for school libraries

Public engagement partnerships with state library organizations

Building a digital national network of library supporters



Start with the Data



CIVIC ATTITUDES

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 4, 2016.
"Libraries 2016"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

VOTER ATTITUDES

In 2018 voters view the library as:

55% - an essential local institution

58% - advancing education

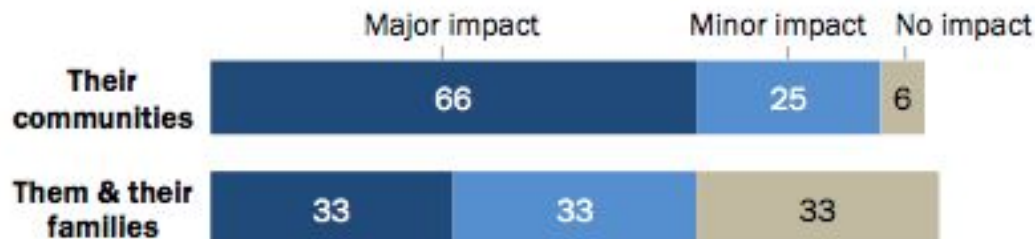
53% - a source of community pride

51% - enhancing the quality of life

CIVIC ATTITUDES

People think closing their local public libraries would hurt communities

% of U.S. adults ages 16 and older who say closing their local libraries would have the following impacts on ...



Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 4, 2016.
"Libraries 2016"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

VOTER ATTITUDES

In 2018 of all voters:

27% will Definitely vote yes for the library

31% are likely to yes for the library

42% are likely or will definitely vote no

the
data

VOTER ATTITUDES

**The positive image of the library has increased.
The willingness to vote for it has decreased.**

Tier/Segment	% of total population		% of segment that would vote "yes" for libraries		Number of annual library visits		% who rate libraries positively		% who rate librarians positively	
	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018
Super Supporters	7.1%	6.5%	80%	64%	15.9	15.9	71%	80%	72%	73%
Probable Supporters	32.3%	25.6%	47%	36%	19.9	13.6	73%	73%	72%	65%

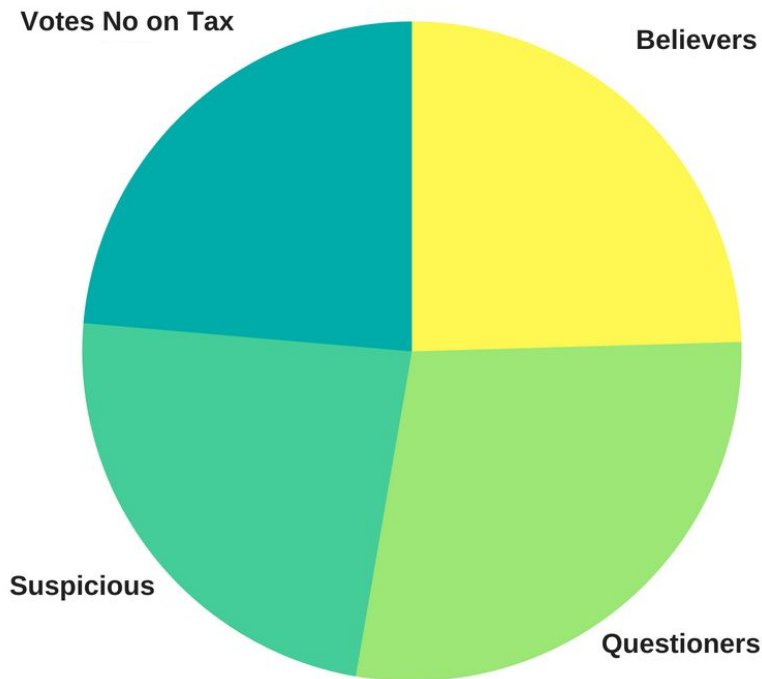
Voter Attitudes about Libraries

27% will Definitely vote yes for the library

31% May vote yes for the library

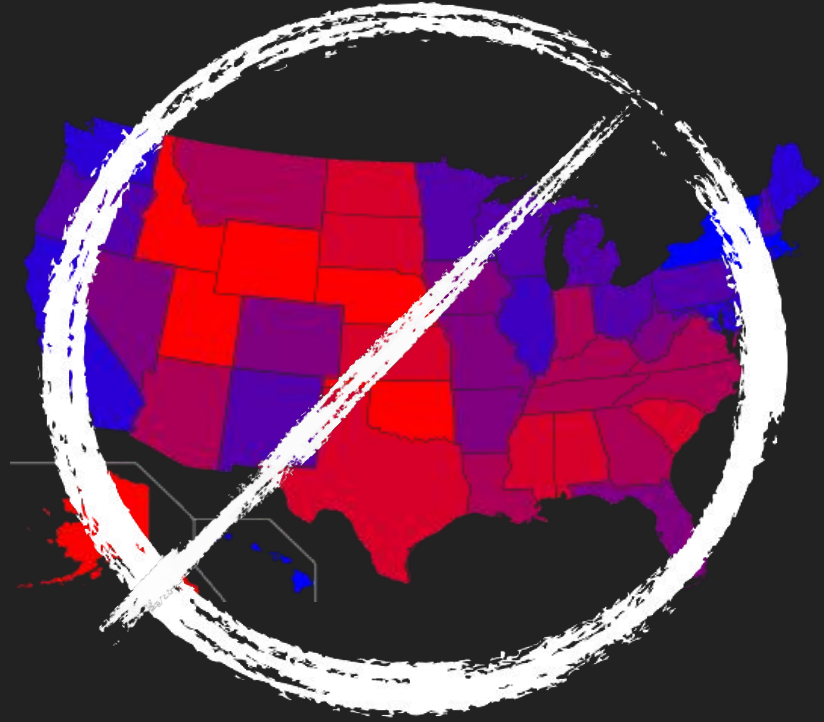
21% May vote no

21% will Vote No



the data

POLITICAL
PARTY
DOESN'T
MATTER



the data
LIBRARY USE
DOESN'T
MATTER





the data

**WHAT
DOES
MATTER?**

Questioners Want Answers

The factors that determine residents' willingness to increase their taxes to support their local library are their *perceptions* and *attitudes* about **the library** and **the librarian**.

- OCLC 2008 "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-3

Believers Believe

[T]he library is not perceived as just a provider of practical answers and information; the most committed supporters hold the **belief** that the library is a transformational *force*.

- OCLC 2008 "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-4

Library Use Does Not Matter

A voter's willingness to support increased library funding is not driven, or limited, by library use.

- OCLC "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-2

It's Not About Making More Users

“If you focus your marketing and messaging to convince people to become users, you will alienate people who don't want to be users but still value who you are and what you do.”

- Before the Ballot (2019)

Perception of the Librarian(s)

[Voters] recognize the value of a '*passionate librarian*' as a true advocate for lifelong learning.

- OCLC 2008 "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-4

What Activates Voters for a Library Measure?

The Librarian is the Candidate

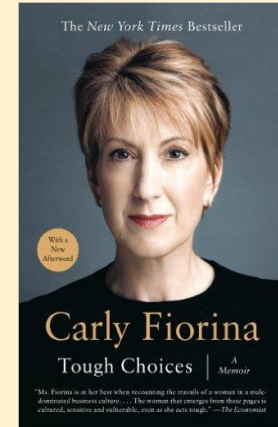
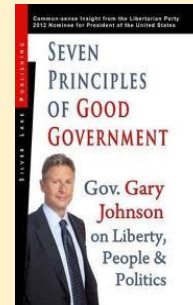
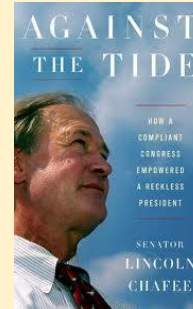
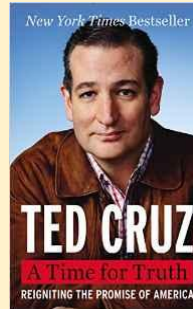
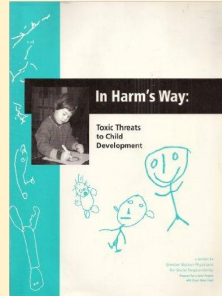
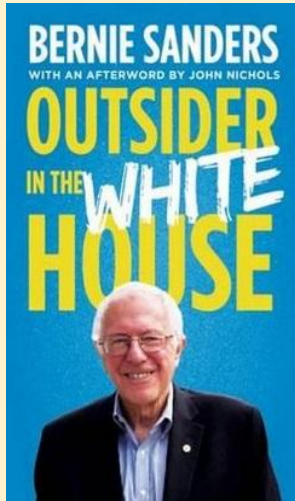
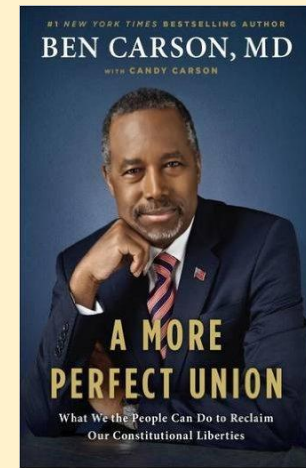
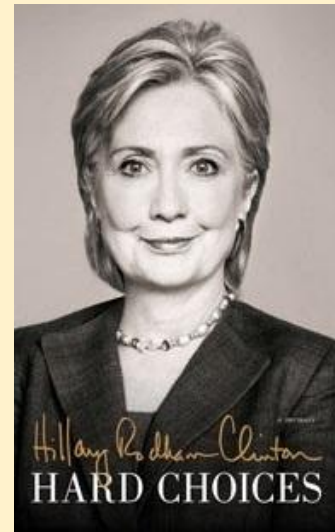
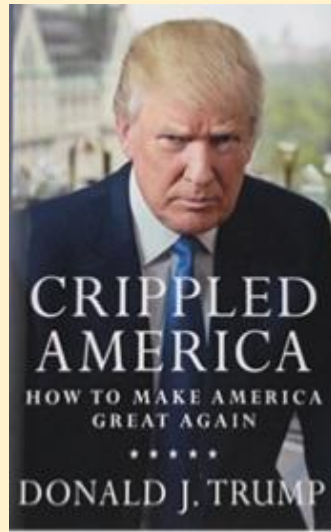
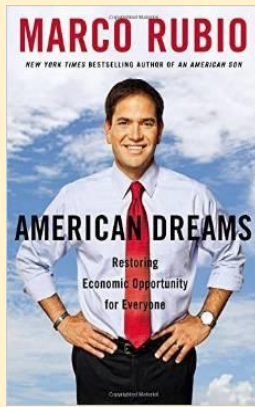
The Library is the Incumbent

Library = Librarians + Community



How Voters Relate to Candidates

1. Shared Values - Do they care about people like me?
2. Shared Identity - Trust that the candidate is representing my concerns.
3. Personal Characteristics - Qualities?
4. Predictability - Policy and praxis.



How Candidates Transmit their Values

*What is Your Book?

Strategic Plan

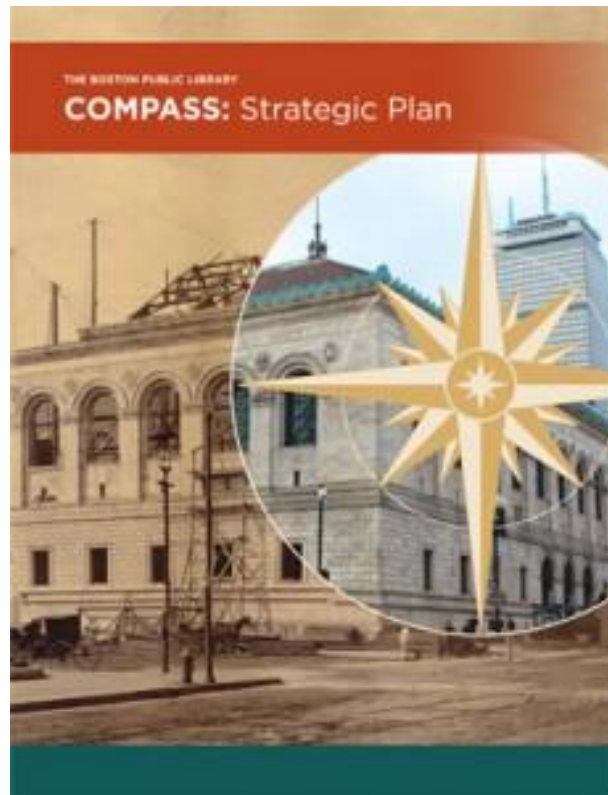
Management Plan

Building Plan

Budget Book

Fundraising Goals

Financials and Fiduciary



Coalitions 101

Pour Another Tea

Coalition 101 Pro-Tip

“Coalitions allow you to advance your agenda by making it part of other agendas.”

- John Chrastka, EveryLibrary



Over a Cup of Coffee

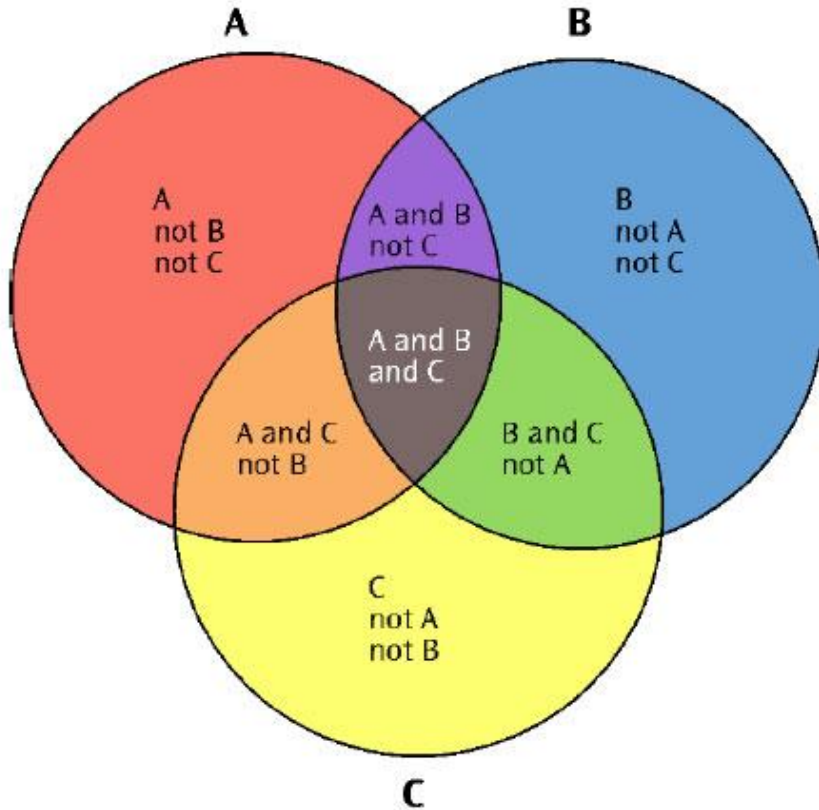
I Like what you're doing ---> *We'll keep you informed...*

I Support what you are doing ---> *How you can help...*

I Want to identify with it ---> *You're on the committee!*



Venn diagram



All issues are
advanced by
Coalitions



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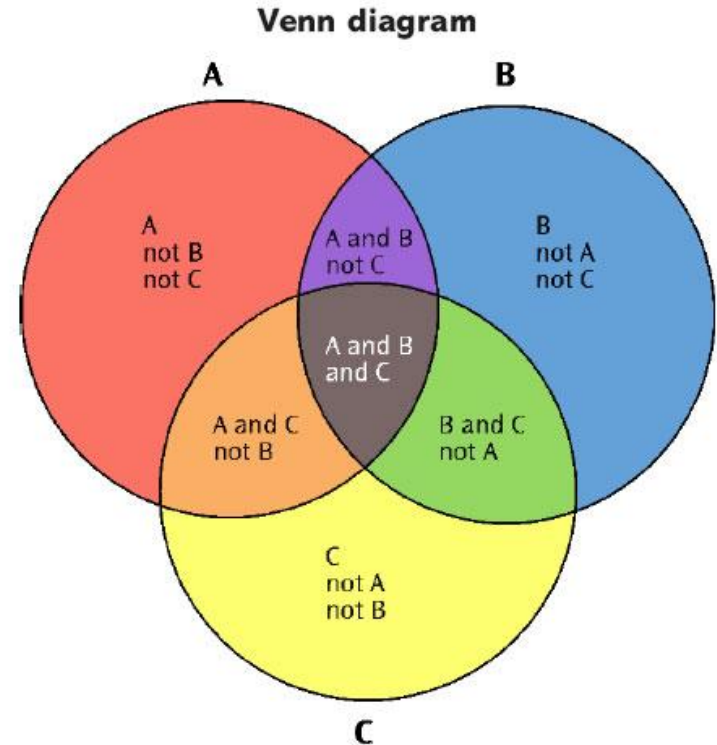
Coalition 101

“Common Cause” in the community

“Common Concern” for a population

Shared Values Framework

Never 100% overlap or you should just merge



Coalition 101

“Common Cause” about a Community Issue
e.g. Housing or food security; redevelopment

“Common Concern” for a Population
e.g. ELL, Homebound, Job Seekers

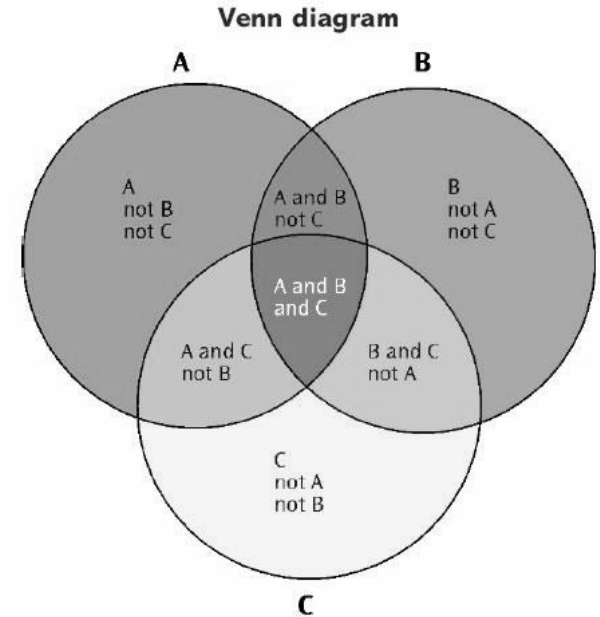
Coalitions are among equals. Libraries tend to ‘serve’ and not see themselves as equals.

Coalition 101

Confusing 'project partners' with
'coalition partners'

Confusing 'sponsors' with
'coalition partners'

Confusing 'should be partners' with
'actually are partners'



Identify an Existing Coalition

Who else wants a cup?

What is Your Agenda?

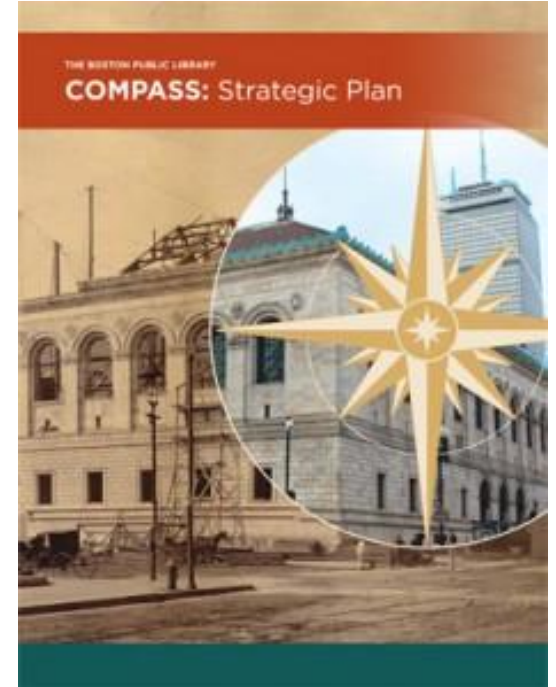
Strategic Plan

Management Plan

Service/Programs/Collections Plan

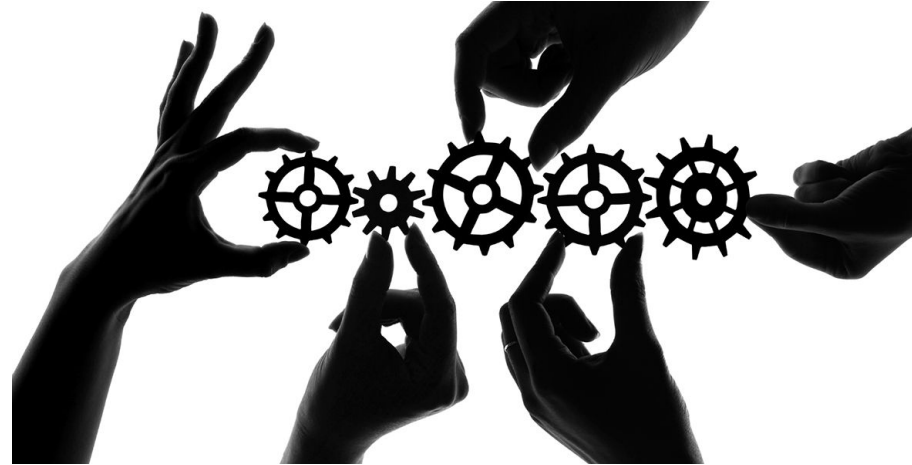
Fundraising Goals

Financials and Fiduciary



Easy Coalitions to Join

- Where do your biggest partners hang out?
- What coalitions do your biggest donors already belong to?
- What have you turned down already because you don't have time?



Exiting Coalitions

State and Local Contexts

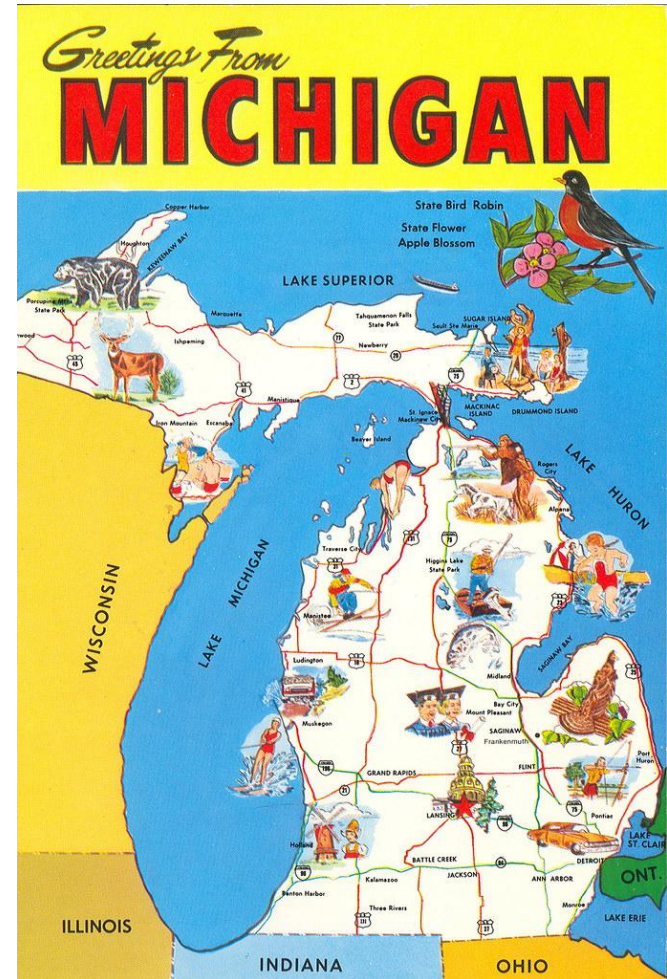
Boards

Commissions

Alliances

Councils

Coalition for/to



What Coalitions are Right for You?

Economic Development

Early Literacy and Early Childhood

Grade Level Reading

Housing and Food Security

Immigration

Safety and Violence



Is this Coalition Right for me?

- A clear 'ask' to potential members?
- A buy-in for membership?
- Is the coalition organized for success?
- Is there a track record of communications
- Is there a budget (money or time) for coalition?
- Are they folks you'd have a glass of tea with?

How to Build a Coalition

Advancing your agenda by making
it part of other agendas

Building a New Coalition

- 1) A clear 'ask' to potential members
 - a) What is the problem / solution?
 - b) What defines buy-in?
- 2) Identify coalition leadership, key organizations, and junior partner organizations
- 3) Draft an coalition organizational chart / structure
 - a) Committees
 - b) Roles for each organization



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Building a New Coalition

- 4) Internal communications protocols and infrastructure
- 5) Communications with external stakeholders, the public, and lobbying targets
- 6) Budget for coalition work - Money and Time both matter

Talking Coalitions

Articulate why you *think / believe / hope* that these organizations will care about your big issue or goal

Who Else Cares?

Who are Your Potential Coalition Members?

Who Else Cares = Potential Partners

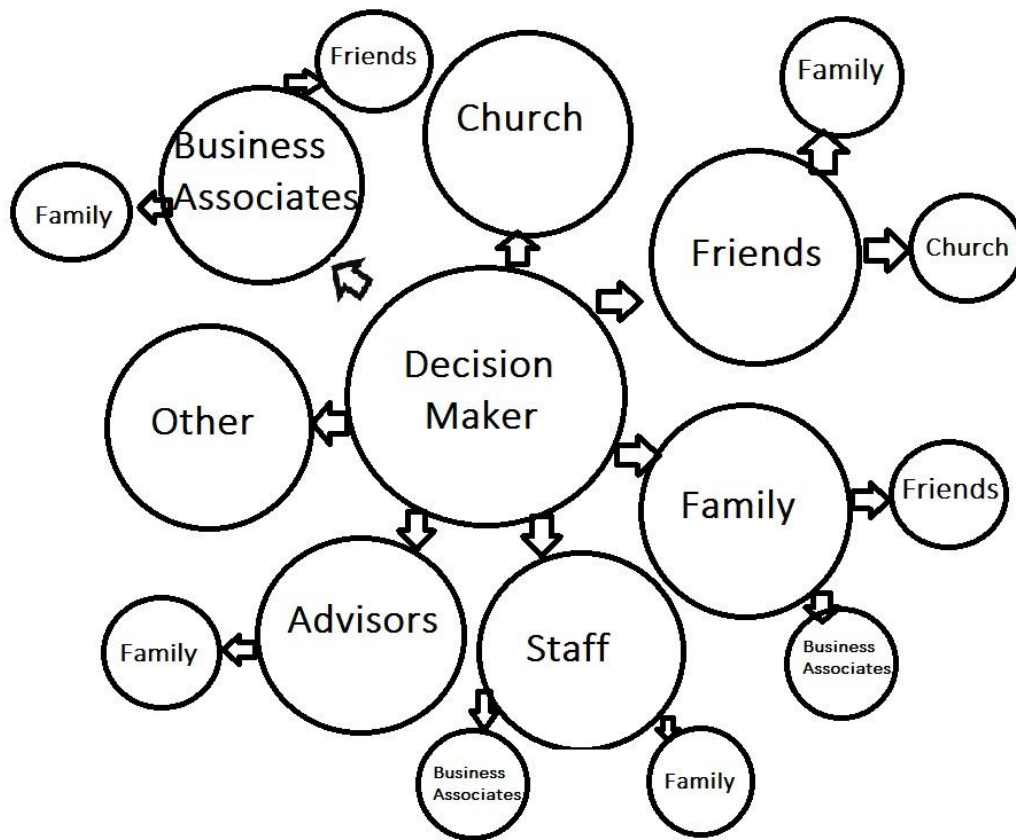
1. Educational Partners
2. Social Welfare and Religious Partners
3. Governmental Partners
4. Civic Partners
5. Business Partners
6. Politicians
7. Media



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*Power Mapping



The First Cup

Your “Insiders” are Your First Coalition

How Do We Find Those People?



Who Joins a Library Team ?

- They are involved in their communities
- They recognize the library's importance to the community and to a child's education
- They are not always heavy users of the library, but believe the library is a noble place, important and relevant to the community



Who Joins the Library Team?

- They recognize the value of a 'passionate librarian' as a true advocate for lifelong learning
- They see the library as a vital community resource like public schools, fire and police, and are willing to increase their taxes to support the library.

Identify Your Team with 5 Quick Questions

Q1. Why is the library important to you, personally?

Q2. What is your favorite reason to use the library?

Q3. Who does the Library serve?*

Q4. Why is the library important to those people?

Q5. What will new funding do to serve those communities?

Your Staff Matters

Without staff being sent out into the world
you will not succeed.

What is Your Personal Why?

Your values about libraries?

Your vision for your community?

Why you do this work/service?

What happens if you don't?



Staff Meeting Homework - VMV

A. Why do you work at the library?	VALUES
B. What are your personal values about libraries and librarianship?	
C. How is your service an expression of those values?	VISION
D. What problems do you enjoy trying to solve for the community?	MISSION
E. What problems do you enjoy trying to solve individual patrons?	

Coalition Pro-Tips

Coalition Pro Tips

Defining success and failure includes the emotional preparation for failure

Insider expectations are often inversely correlated to the likelihood of success

Engineer “Small Victories” early in the process - either benchmarks or occurrences

Communication *from* stakeholders barely happens ever



Keep it Relevant



Coalitions: Insiders and Outsiders

To Library Users:

“As you know...”

To Non-Users:

“As you can imagine...”



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Today's Slides:

<https://www.slideshare.net/EveryLibrary>

action.everylibrary.org



Thank You

John Chrastka, EveryLibrary
john.chrastka@everylibrary.org
312-574-0316

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