

Community Building and Engagement: Partnerships at Work



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Presented by Deb Hoadley

Definitions

- **Community engagement** process of building relationships with community members who will work side-by-side with you as an ongoing partner with the end goal of making the community a better place to live.
- **Partnership** is a collaborative relationship between entities to work toward shared objectives through a mutually agreed division of labor.

Culture & Philosophy

- Beyond outreach
- Inclusive
- Failure is okay
- Support & training
- Not one and done
- Time

Trustee Tip:
People are the
assets, not the
books.



Listen & Learn

Think about what
you can offer

- Connections & relationships
- Space
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Skills
- Collections
- Programming
- Services
- Marketing & promotion



Intentional Planning

- Don't just fill a need
- Use data
- Library mission
- Say yes with possibility and within reason
- Look for unique resources & skills

Trustee Tip:
Do a few things
excellent; not all
things just okay.



Turn Outward

- Create conversations
 - What is working?
 - What is possible?
 - What shall we do to achieve it?
- Training needed
 - Facilitation
 - Interviewing
 - Networking

Trustee Tip:
Everyone should be having these conversations – not just the director. Trustees, Friends, staff, and other stakeholders.

Strategic Connections

- Review library plan
- Establish partnerships that enhance library's capacity, impact & ability
- Participate in community discussions
- Engage with experts
- Support innovation



Networking

- Bridge & connector
- Not a sales pitch (again?)
- Build relationships
- Open & willing
- Captive audience
- Collect business cards
- Follow-up

Trustee Tip:
Expand your role to
include networking.
Support this throughout
all levels of the staff.

Social Media – Use it!

- LinkedIn – business audience
- Twitter – short message for library to engage
- Facebook – builds relationships



Partnership Plan

Parts of the Plan

- Define need
- Start process
- Maintain partnership
- Evaluate

Trustee Tip:
Not every partnership
will work. Accept
failure and move on.

Barriers

- One dominates
- No clear purpose
- Lack of communication
- Hidden agenda
- No evaluation system
- Resources needed outweigh the benefits

Keys for Success



- Set expectations
 - Who is leading?
 - What are the roles and responsibilities
- Recognize & allow differences
- Clear purpose & shared mission
- Commitment from administration
- Develop & maintain trust
- Focus on process & outcomes, not structure & inputs
- Evaluate & measure

Memorandum of Understanding

- Background and description of the partnership
- Goals of the partnership
- Commitments and guiding principles
- Partnership opportunities
- Process
- Responsibilities and accountabilities of both parties
- Responsibilities and accountabilities of (Library)
- Responsibilities and accountabilities of (Organization)
- Decision-making



Resources

(Click on title to open link in browser)

1. [ALA Transforming Libraries with Turning Outward from the Harwood Institute](#)
2. [Turning Outward Quiz](#)
3. [The Aspen Institute Dialogue for Public Libraries](#)
4. [Aspen Institute – Action Guide](#)
5. [Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together](#)
6. [Sample 1: Memorandum of Understanding](#)
7. [Sample 2: MOU](#)

Questions & Comments

Success stories?

Challenges?

Questions?

Contact Info:

Deb Hoadley, Hoadley Consulting

debhoadley@hoadleyconsulting.com

Thank You