Future-Proofing Your Library
How to Engage Stakeholders and get organized for successful advocacy

Library Mission and Your Personal "Why"

Speaking personally and passionately to leaders and community members about the Library's mission and benefit for people and community will help build support.

Why do you, <u>personally</u>, choose to serve the Library?
How have libraries made a difference for you and/or those in your family?

Who does the Library serve? Who benefits from the Library's work?

Why is the Library's important to people the library serves? What difference have you seen the Library make in the lives of community members?

Effective communication is 20% what you know and 80% how you feel about what you know.

– Jim Rohn

Tailor Language to Community Groups

You can tailor the language you use to describe your work to different community groups by reflecting on what they care about. Creating a communication plan to connect with stakeholders across all spheres leads to an understanding of how the Library enacts the value system of the community and supports a shared vision.

- **Educational Stakeholders:** *"Who else cares about education?"* Organizations, agencies, and stakeholder groups (formal and informal) that cover pre-k, k-12, after school, and college/career readiness. Think about the people who run, organize, manage, or staff these organizations. What language might appeal to them?

- **Social Welfare or Faith-Based Stakeholders:** *"Who else cares about the same populations?"* Organizations, agencies, and stakeholder groups that run or support Counseling Centers, Food Pantry / WIC, Jobs Training Center, Literacy Centers, Youth Oriented Organizations, other Human Services and faith-based organizations.

- **Governmental Agency Stakeholders:** *"Who Cares What the Tax Rate is?"* People who run the town/city/ county/state agencies and departments who are partners or potential partners with you on programs or services, or that do overlapping or competitive services with the Library.

- **Civic/Social/Arts Organization Stakeholders:** *"Who Else Wants to Change the World a Bit?"* Civic and social clubs, organizations, and community groups. Examples include traditional clubs and orgs like the Rotary, and newer or transitional ones that come together with a local-focus on social media. Note volunteer or paid leadership of Clubs and Social Organizations, Heritage and Local History, GLBT, Immigrant and New Resident, Arts & Culture organizations, and Environment and Livable Communities.

- **Business Stakeholders:** *"Who Doesn't Always Know about how the Library helps to support a healthy, thriving economy?"* Who are the biggest employers in town? Who runs and supports the various 'main street' or business district orgs in the community? Who is concerned about business growth and support? Who are your retail neighbors, including restaurants, bars, and services? Who are the key realtors in the community?

- **Politicians and Local Elected officials:** *"Who else has constituents and cares about the overall healthy functioning and livability of the community?"* Local, State, Federal officials, including key 'former electeds' who still have a role in the political life of the community.

- **Formal and Informal Media and Social Networks**: "*Who needs to hear it first?"* What are the local sources of information and gossip in town – formal and informal? Include Newspapers, Social Media Groups, Bloggers, Networkers, Influencers, and Connectors (aka gossips).

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

– African Proverb

Preparing to talk with Leaders

Before meeting with leaders, make time to research them and develop an understanding of who they are and what they care about. Reviewing their biographies, and (if elected) bill sponsorships, public statements and platform, help you develop an effective message that aligns with their values.

Name of leader and their position:_____

What issues do they care about? What is their agenda? (Education? Economy? Health? Safety? Environment? Housing? Homelessness? Good Govt?)

What are their core values? Can you identify areas of common cause (i.e. a policy outcome) or common concern (i.e. a common population served)

What are some key messages about the Library you can share that, based on your research, will resonate with this person?

What are some offers you can make to help this person be successful and realize their agenda ?

Suggested Research Sources include: Official govt. or organizational webpage, campaign materials, Wikipedia, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Legistorm, Votesmart, Ballotpedia.

Future-Proofing the Library

We should remember that good fortune often happens when opportunity meets with preparation.

- Thomas A. Edison

Effective Messaging: 27 – 9 – 3

The 27=9-3 rule is a classic and frequently used approach to developing effective messaging. In short, the model suggests that we develop a message with no more than 27 words, deliverable in nine seconds, and containing just three (or fewer) ideas.

Generic 27-9-3 Message About The Library:

27-9-3 Message About the Library: Audience 1_____

27-9-3 Message About the Library: Audience 2_____

27-9-3 Message About the Library: Audience 3_____

Every act of communication is a miracle of translation.
– *Ken Liu*

THE THREE LANGUAGES OF POLITICS

In his book, *The Three Languages of Politics: Talking Across the Political Divide* author Arnold Kling suggests that there are three main ideological groups: progressives, libertarians, and conservatives. Each of these groups has a specific frame/worldview and – importantly - a specific default language that they use to describe the world.

Kling's hope is that by becoming more aware of our personal worldview and the language that we default to using to make political arguments, we can learn to communicate our values and positions in the language of the other two groups, thereby reducing polarization and making it easier to find common ground.

The Three Spheres

Progressives fundamentally see the world as an axis of oppressed vs. oppressor. While they may value self-determination, personal liberty and responsibility, and the importance of tradition and group bonds, their values of equity and justice will take precedence. **Tip**: Frame the value of your work in language and stories of equity, social justice, a leveling of the playing field for all community members, and equal treatment for all.

Libertarians fundamentally see the world as an axis of personal liberty vs. coercion. While they may value the importance of equity, social justice, tradition and group bonds, their values of liberty, self-determination, and freedom from government regulations will take precedence. **Tip**: Frame the value of your work in language and stories of liberty, self-determination, opportunity, hard work, and support for those that are motivated to help themselves.

Conservatives fundamentally see the world as an axis of civilization/tradition vs. barbarism. While they may value the importance of equity, social justice, liberty, self-determination, and freedom from government regulations, their values of tradition and the importance of group identity, will take precedence.
Tip: Frame the value of your work in language and stories of preservation of tradition, local community history, family, helping new arrivals assimilate, and national, western, religious values.

One of my prescriptions for slow political thinking is to try to avoid telling yourself, "I'm reasonable, they're not." Instead, I would suggest the following rule of thumb. The only person you are qualified to pronounce unreasonable is yourself.

- Arnold Kling

Effective Messaging:
Three Languages of Politics

Practice communicating the value and impact of the library to progressives, libertarians, and conservatives

Message to Progressives

Message to Libertarians

Message to Conservatives

Progressives, conservatives, and libertarians are like tribes speaking different languages.

The language that resonates with one tribe does not connect with the others.

– Arnold Kling

Combining Stories/Data for Maximum Impact

People make decisions emotionally. Data alone will not persuade. Support for the Library is driven by emotion and belief in the Library's positive impact in the lives of community members.

- ID a story/quote that will generate a positive emotional response.
- Use data/statistics to multiple the power of the story.
- Define the larger outcome to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the Library's positive impact for the community over time.

Story/Quote/Picture

Data/Statistic (i.e. how many people served; items circulated; programs)

Outcome (i.e. refer to longitudinal research about literacy, etc.)

Stories are not mere flights of fantasy or instruments of political power and control.

They link us to our past, provide us with critical insight into the present and enable us to envision our lives not just as they are but as they should be or might become.

Imaginative knowledge is not something you have today and discard tomorrow. It is a way of perceiving the world and relating to it.

– Azar Nafisi

action planning

KEY CONCEPTS, INSIGHTS, AND TAKEAWAYS

1. _____
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2. _____
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3. _____
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4. _____
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The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

Alice Walker

action planning

ACTIONS I CAN TAKE TO APPLY WHAT I'VE LEARNED

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2. _____
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3. _____
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4. _____
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Future-Proofing the Library

You are what you do, not what you say you'll do.

C.G. Jung