Good Partner, Bad Partner: Which role do you play?

Real Places Conference 2018
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Why Partnering: A story

- CHC Outreach Program focuses on organizational capacity building
- Recruitment and retention are a common CHC struggle
- Turns out, recruitment and retention are tied to organizational visibility
- Partnering increases visibility and strengthens organizational identity
Partnering helps organizations by...

- increasing pool of volunteers
- expanding funding opportunities
- diversifying available skill sets
- providing more visibility in community
- expanding educational opportunities
- diversifying outreach opportunities
What characteristics contribute to a constructive partnership?
Characteristics of Healthy Partnerships

• **Effective communication** – Share information, opportunities, and resources.

• **Collaboration** – Allow all partners to have a voice. Plans and outcomes should reflect what each partner wants to accomplish.

• **Respectful interactions** – A healthy partnership considers the needs of both organizations. Issues should be resolved with respect and understanding.

• **Relationships evolve** – Realize when your organization isn’t partnering in such a way as to meet the needs of partner organizations and make adjustments.
What characteristics lead to less productive partnerships?
Signs of Unproductive Partnerships

• Being territorial with information / not sharing information

• Focusing solely on your needs—what you want, when you want it, how you want it

• Controlling the partnership instead of enabling an organic collaboration

• Providing the same events, the same way, every year with the same participants
Communication Responsibilities

- Is it your organization’s responsibility to keep its partners informed?

- Do you have expectations regarding how often partners should communicate with you?

- Do you have a communications plan/contact?
Partnership Benefits

• Should each organization benefit from every joint endeavor?

• Are there partnership trade-offs?

• Is the partnership mutually beneficial?
Collaboration and Ownership

Ask the following questions:

• Should you determine what will be the most helpful way for partners to participate?

• Do you ask for partner preferences and abilities?

• Do you follow-up to see if partner goals have been accomplished?
Adapting to Organizational Change

• Can changes in leadership—for your org or partner—influence organizational change?

• Are changes in leadership seen as opportunities?

• Do you anticipate organizational change over time?
How to improve partnerships

• Specify what you seek from partner:
  – Financial sponsorship
  – Advertising assistance
  – Event planning and execution
  – Something else?

• Initiate proactive planning

• Use productivity questions to help frame conversations about what your organization needs
Establishing realistic expectations

- Relationships with political figures
- Large/high-profile organizations
- Smaller or less-established organizations
When to re-evaluate the worth of a partnership?

- Partner involved in political controversy that you should avoid
- Internal fighting gets in the way of productive partnering
- Backlash from community interferes with organizational goals
- Demonstrates more “bad partner” characteristics than good, even after having had conversations with partner to address issues
Partnering Tips

• Identify non-traditional partners
• Diversify participation
• Invite participation in events
Diversifying Ongoing Events

- What can be improved?
- Could a partnership help?
- Think of three non-traditional partners that may make sense to approach.
Moving Forward — Make a Plan

• Reflect on current partnerships

• Adjust approach/expectations, if necessary

• Think of new partnership avenues that could be helpful to your organization

• Have a plan to approach – remember to be specific about goals and expectations