

Building a NETWORK

ONE
Massachusetts.org

30 Winter Street Boston, MA 02108

** adapted from *NET GAINS: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change*
by Peter Plastrik & Madeleine Taylor, funded by the Wending Foundation & the Barr Foundation

ONE Massachusetts

A network-in-formation of people and organizations sharing a common vision – to rebuild public confidence in our capacity to work together, through our government, to expand economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in Massachusetts.

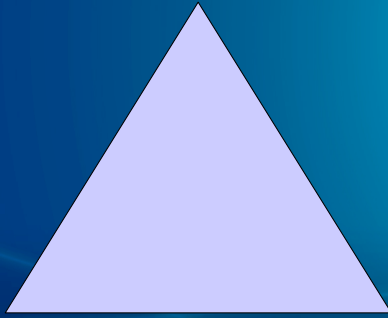
Facilitator's Note:

Yes ONE Mass, like all Networks, will be always growing and developing.

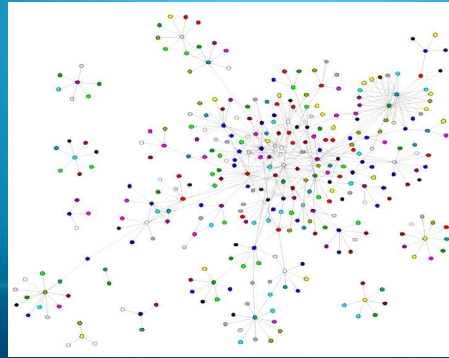
Collective Value Proposition

- We want – and recognize that all Massachusetts residents deserve – healthy lives; healthy families; quality education; safe, vibrant communities; and broadly shared prosperity in a thriving state.
- These are goals we cannot achieve alone and can best accomplish by working together through a participatory, democratic government.
- By joining our diverse voices, experiences and resources together, we can create the public will to build effective, fairly-funded government that achieves these goals.

Networks are Different than Organizations



vs.



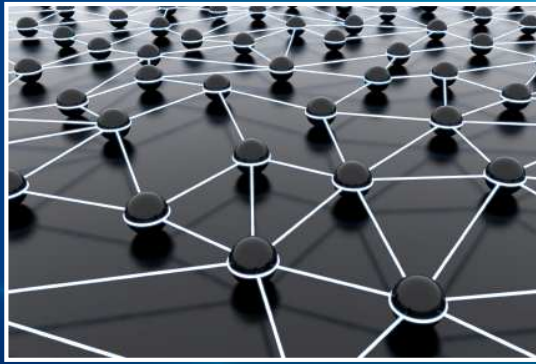
Facilitator's Note:

- Networks are different than organizations
 - traditional orgs are like pyramids - stable, top down
 - networks are flexible; structures are provisional
 - networks adapt far more easily than organizations
 - traditional orgs are hierarchical; networks are flat

Characteristics of a network:

- NOT a single point of decision-making
 - Easy for people to come in and out
 - A high degree of freedom AND a high degree of agreement
 - Intentional activity-based linkages

Advantages of a Network



1. Collective Intelligence
2. Easy to Grow
3. Rapid Diffusion
4. Resilient
5. Adaptive Capacity

Facilitator's Note:

- 1) For example, MoveOn.org
- 2) Diffusion refers to a network's ability to spread ideas, information or resources to its nodes
- 3) Diversity is a strength
- 4) A network is a self-healing system
- 5) A network has the ability to assemble and reassemble capacities

Connectivity

- Makes communications easy
- “Thicker” richer information
- Strong “navigational” functions
- “Weak ties”



Facilitator's Note:

Examples of connectivity infrastructure: directories, clearing houses, email list-serves.

Alignment: The Collective Value Proposition

- Use our core values to establish a general purpose for the network
- Learn about your potential partners
- Walk the “two-way” street
- Find the “win-win” opportunities



Facilitator’s Note:

Explain each element of a collective value proposition

- General purpose: E.g., to work on public policies for rural areas, to improve youth-in-transition programs.
- Learn about potential partners: Find out what goals others in the potential network seek to achieve and what they need to achieve them.
- Two way street: Explore with others the ways the network can create value for them so they can achieve their goals, and ways they can create value for the Network.
- Explore mutual, actionable goals that the network could pursue – what specific results would be good for all members of the network?

Discussion: What does it take on flip chart: (Requires regular face-to-face interaction, a shared set of ideas, language, standard, identity or reason for being, a shared reason to care about each other, requires trust, requires relinquishing a measure of autonomy in favor of the group.)

Why You and Why Now?

- It's about time we began to win our issue campaigns to improve our government and create a humane and just society.
- It's about time we all stood together around our core values to combat 40 years of anti-government rhetoric.
- It's about time we all worked together to rebuild the public's confidence that our government, given the proper resources, can make a positive difference in the lives of our families and our communities.

Facilitator's Note:

You are talking to a diverse group of local or regional advocates who have been long time activist for one cause or another. There may be a mixture of public officials, community opinion leaders, etc.

Ask people to go around the room and describe what they have been doing to build a healthier community in their local town or city.

The Problem: An Unchallenged Attack

Focused anti-government, anti-tax messages to shape public opinion

"My goal is to cut government in half in twenty-five years to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub."
 "Government is a parasite that takes our money and wastes it."

Work on specific issues while echoing cynicism about government

Category	Estimated Percentage
HEALTH CARE	35%
EDUCATION	15%
LOCAL AID	10%
OTHER	10%
PUBLIC SAFETY	5%
ENVIRONMENT	5%
HUMAN SERVICES	5%
DEBT SERVICE, PENSIONS	5%

Facilitator's Note: *walk through the slide*

Here is our problem, we have all been living under this anti-government battle for 40 years, it started with Barry Goldwater in 1964.....

While at the same time we have been working on specific issues using this cynicism when talking about government (saying that they are doing it wrong and we have a solution that won't cost any money or will even save money.)

What are the most important elements of a healthy community?

Check the ones are supported or encouraged by government

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Facilitator's Note:

Let's start by putting our personal work aside for a minute and just brainstorm about what it takes to make a healthy community. Of course since you already said your work is vital to a healthy community you can nominate it.

Activity

Using a flip chart go around the room and ask:

1. What do we think it takes to make a healthy community?
2. Which one of these important elements is dependent on Government resources

Local/Regional Network experiences

Best/Toughest part of working together

- Prop 2 ½ _____/_____
- Clean up Toxic Waste Site _____/_____
- Stop/Welcome New Industry _____/_____
- ?
- ?
- ?
- ?



Facilitator's Note:

On a Flip chart facilitate folks reporting on their personal experiences with working together with neighbors in their community. Ask them to say why they decided to join and what was the best part of the experience, and what was the worse part.

Key Tasks of Network Builders

- **Weaving** – helping people meet, increase ease of sharing
- **Facilitating** – helping explore potential shared identity, a common interest and a collective value proposition
- **Coordinating** – helping people plan and implement collaborative actions

Facilitator's Note:

Discussion: key to the success of a local Network – on Flip chart any specific examples from your experiences?

A weaver - helping people meet, increase ease of sharing

A facilitator - helping explore potential shared identity & value propositions

A coordinator - helping people plan and implement collaborative actions

Discussion: why each key task is important, and which one is the trickiest. Follow up on previous discussion about best and toughest part of working together using a flip chart.

Facilitators, try to isolate specific issue: did the network have a clear mission or vision; desired measurable outcomes; membership criteria (responsibilities/accountability of members); a strategic plan; transparency in distribution of resources, governance (how are decisions were made: e.g. consensus, majority vote, emergence)?

What is the best way to help define a common interest...

- 1. Identify the problem** - the barrier to the shared value
- 2. Identify the shared core values** – justice, prevention, family, community, equality, opportunity, fairness, prosperity
- 3. Identify an achievable solution** – to going around, digging under, jumping over, knocking down the barrier
- 4. Identify an effective appropriate action**

Facilitator's Note:

Can we find a common interest? Using a flip chart and the list that participants came up with of the political power centers in their community and what they do to make our community healthy. Brainstorm for 3 minutes to find things that might be in everyone's common interest in your community.

- Good education for children
- Living wage jobs for everyone
- Clean air
- Clean water
- Etc. etc. etc.

- Identify the shared core values, (The public health of community depends on access to clean water)
- Identify the problem (We have to over treat our water because the reservoir has been compromised by development and it tastes bad)
- Identify an achievable solution (encourage brainstorming --- do developers pay, do new homeowners pay a surcharge to build new filtration system)
- Identify possible action campaign

Activities that can help convince civic leaders into finding a common interest in joining a local ONE Mass Network

- 1. Communications trainings** – help them work the ONE Mass vision and their shared values into their materials and activities i.e. press events, press releases and reports, editorial board visits, flyers, alerts, letters to editor, etc.
- 2. Budget and Tax Policy Literacy Trainings** – help them understand how taxes are raised and how they are spent in their own community and in the state through presentations to various community and business groups.
- 3. Organizing them into a specific “healthy community” campaign** - i.e. non-binding ballot resolution, 21/2 over ride, Community Preservation ballot question, etc.

Facilitator’s Note:

Using a flip chart strategize about at least three kinds of possible network activities and talk through how these activities could be used to promote the ONE Mass vision and use ONE Mass training activities.

What You Can Do

- **Learn Strategic Communication** - Know that it's different to think about framing but once you are aware and begin trying to shift the frames you build, you will notice how much more effective you are in reforming government.
- **Keep Current** - Read newspapers and keep up with current affairs and events. Notice the messages and frames you are hearing and seeing.
- **Engage Others** - Work with others in your community around local issue campaigns to understand the importance of shifting how people see government and demonstrate how we can change the way we talk about it in letters to the editor, op-eds, newsletter articles, calls into talk radio, town meetings and other public venues.

Facilitator's Note:

1. "Well here are three simple things you can do to work toward that" (press button)
 1. (press button) Keep aware of current events and affairs. Know what is going on in society and how issues and topics are being framed in the media.
 2. (press button) Work with others to share this message. Organize a slide presentation like this one, share your notes and do whatever it takes to help others understand the shift we need to see in the way we are thinking about government. (press button)
 3. Think about how you are communicating. Are you leading with big picture level one values and cueing up the frame that is most useful to the conversation?

We can only win if we're organized



Facilitator's Note:

Pretty simple you can't do it alone.

We can only win if we're organized



Facilitator's Note:

Helps to get allies to see a common interest.

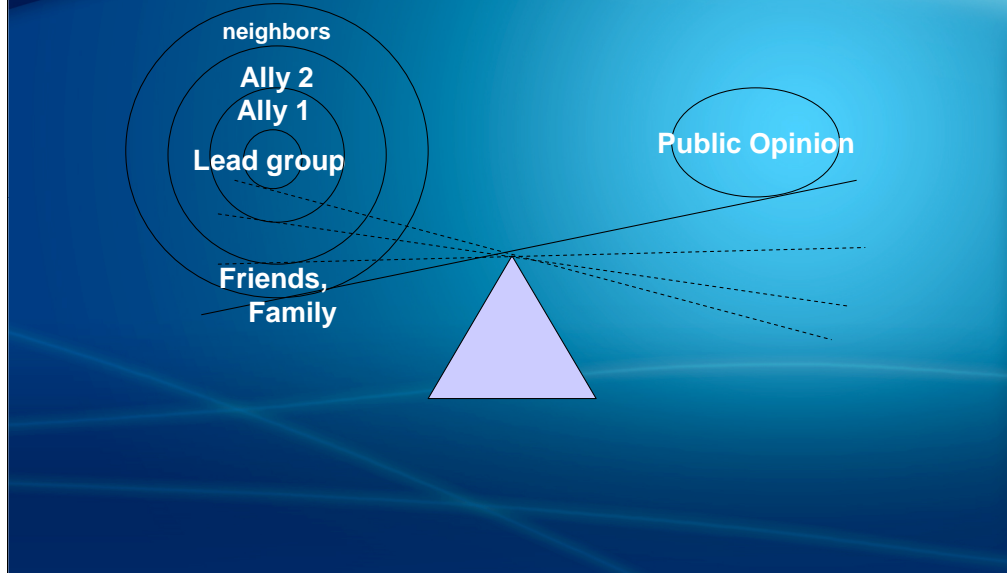
We can only win if we're organized



Facilitator's Note:

Helps even more to get more allies.

We can only win if we're organized



Facilitator's Note:

Helps even more to get your family members, good luck!!