



Setting Coalitions Up for Success, Preparing Them for Evolution

Alliance for Early Success

2018 Partner Summit

November 2018

Designing New Coalitions

1. Be Clear about your Shared Purpose
Be clear about the purpose and value-add a new coalition brings to the field, community, etc.
2. Identify a Shared Vision that is Inclusive of Those Involved
Make the tent big enough for everyone to see her/him/them self in it (but not too big you lose focus).
3. Develop Minimal Levels of Structure
Coalitions can get lost in creating too much structure, which often leads toward concerns over decision-making. Identify the minimum level of structure needed to work together. Then test it.
4. Clear Decision-Making & Governance Guidelines
Be clear about your decision-making process and define it. There are multiple definitions around consensus and/or democratic decision-making processes. Be clear about when formal decisions are necessary.
5. Engage Stakeholders and Influencers to Support Coalition Building and Collaboration
Engage the obvious and not-so-obvious stakeholders and influencers to begin connecting your issues to others.

Strengthen Your Coalition

1. Relationship Building among Coalition Collaborators and Stakeholders
 - a. Know who *is* and *is not* part of your Coalition
 - Understand why People/Organization's are Participating
 - Understand why People/Organization's are *not* Participating
 - b. Power Map your Coalition to help Identify Who is Missing
2. Understand Who Wins or Loses, and the Impact this Has on Your Coalition and its Partners/Collaborators
3. Encourage Discussion and Dialog through Facilitation in Meetings to Gain Greater Buy-In, *e.g. External Facilitator or Staff Trained in Facilitation*
4. Developed Key Messages Focused on Impact & Outcomes
 - a. Avoid Common Error of Highlighting Process/ Activities

- b. Messages Should be Broad Enough to Include All Collaborators
 - c. Focus on Humanity, *not* Brand
- 5. Increase Engagement through Remote Participation and Collaboration Tools, *e.g.* *Online Meeting Platforms or Online Shared Documents*

Key Lessons

1. Coalition's Should be Built on Trust, Not Control
2. Lead with Your Shared Vision & Collective Purpose
 - a. Start where you have Agreement – and keep these front and center when making decisions
 - b. If the Coalition *does not* add value to the field or individual organizations then it may not need to exist
3. Coalition Work Needs to be Managed Inside and Outside
4. Expect Conflict and Have Processes in Place to Manage it
 - a. Attempt to manage conflict internally. Engage in open dialogue with those who are creating it, as well as those impacted by it.
 - b. Engage in external strategies, such as leveraging other influencers to bring someone in line, or avoid active work against the coalition position.
 - c. Agree upon messaging around the conflict, both internal and external.