CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

The FDR Memorial Legacy Committee

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Making a Collaborative Relationship Work

Every organization is unique, perhaps even a little "quirky."

Be prepared to spend the time needed to understand the organization's mission, goals, administrative structure, and systems of operating.

Communicate in a non-judgemental way. Despite any weaknesses that you might feel exist, the organization has probably earned its stripes and has reasons for doing what it does the way it does it. Consider the company they keep.

Remember that partnerships are based on relationships. Multiple points of contact and rapport with more than one person in the organization are essential to creating a healthy, mutually beneficial and reinforcing relationship. Both organizations will benefit from increased institutional knowledge and improved organizational capacity.

Remember your audience of underpaid, overworked, busy nonprofit managers.

Remain attentive to the needs of collaboration partners, members, etc.
- Keep in mind the learning curve of new members
- Be sensitive to the time constraints of partners/members
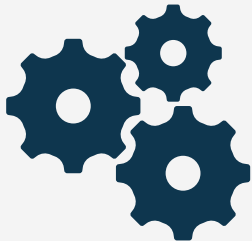
Ensure mutual understanding of critical definitions and titles
- Develop a glossary so stakeholders, partners, and new members can fully engage in all aspects of the organization from the day they pay their dues or sign up (meetings, consumption of written materials, interaction on websites, etc.).
- Choose project titles that are intuitively understood and with naming conventions that do not overlap with each other. Keep in mind that titles, phrases, etc. used internally may not be readily or widely understood by "outsiders."
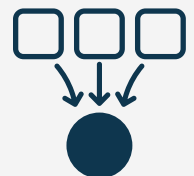
Make sure that data shared has relevance to the partners/members with whom it is shared with and that it is easily understood and clearly sourced.

Endeavor to maintain the relevance. A successful collaborative must provide a "value add" and few have resources to join just to signal support.

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FDR MEMORIAL LEGACY COMMITTEE