Librarians as Community Change Agents: Effective Community Leadership

Craig Gerhart
President, Gerhart Enterprises Inc.
Former County Executive
csgerhart@gmail.com
Session Objectives

• What are our communities facing?
• How does a City/County Manager’s head work?
• What can Library Directors and staff do to help communities?
• Explore a tool to help understand the possibilities.
Athenian Oath

We will ever strive for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many; we will unceasingly seek to quicken the sense of public duty; we will revere and obey the city’s laws; we will leave this city not only not less, but greater, better and more beautiful than it was given to us.
Where Leadership Happens

- Operating the System
- Improving the System
- Creating the Future
Leadership is Not a Game of Solitaire.

Leadership is influencing others...

toward the (public) purpose of the organization.
Build Relationships, Build Trust

• Be a Good Politician
  – Cultivate an active clientele
  – Develop confidence among officials
  – Exploit one’s opportunities

• Clientele: Find, Serve, Expand, Get Feedback

• Confidence
  – Be what they think you are.
  – Play it straight
  – Have integrity

Aaron Wildavsky
Politics of the Budgetary Process, 1964
Who are your bosses?

- What is my governance structure?
  - City/County Department
  - Library Board, Authority, or District
  - Single or multiple jurisdictions
- To whom do I report?
- To whom does the person to which I report, report?
- Somewhere in the above, the City or County Manager matters.
Building the Relationship

1. Understand the other person’s concerns and issues;
2. Be a team player and effective advocate;
3. Be present and sociable;
4. Keep your Manager informed.
1. Understand Your Manager

Steve Covey, “seek first to understand and then to be understood.”

John Pickering, give yourself a mental promotion.

• Questions
  – If I were manager, mayor, budget director what questions or concerns would I have?
  – If I were on the council, commission, or board what questions or concerns would I have?
local government

demographics
polarized politics
technology + social media
haves + have-nots
economic crisis
jobs  environment  safety

education  healthcare  infrastructure
Decade of Local Government

• Feds are broke and dysfunctional

• Many states struggling with pension obligations

• No help is coming from higher levels of govt.

• Community progress will occur based on leadership at the local level.
Typical Community Strategic Plan

- Economic Development – Jobs, Investment, Wages
- Education – Graduation Rates, Test Scores
- Public Safety – Crime Rates, Loss of Property
- Human Services – Obesity levels, Partnerships
- Infrastructure – Transportation, Broadband

So where does this leave libraries?
Prince William MAGIC

- Dick Murphy
- MAGIC
- The Long Game
- Neighborhood Services
- DRIVE
- Cartwheelers
Practical Steps

• Attend non-library budget work sessions
• Attend town hall meetings and public forums
• Attend or read “state of city” speeches/reports/surveys
• Review the strategic plan(s)
• Reach out to learn
• Build partnerships – formal and informal
Miami, Oklahoma – From EDGE To Partnerships

• The library convened a community focus group - what’s important?

• The group recommended the establishment of community partnerships

• Community partnerships became key element in library’s Strategic Plan

• New Partnership with Workforce - job searching skills workshops (improve community employment)

• New partnership established with hospital and tribal council conducting Health Literacy workshops (improve community health)
2. Be a team player and an effective advocate

- Numbers without stories are just numbers.
- Stories without numbers are just stories.
Performance Measures

- What is the service demand in your community?
- What is your level of service?
- What are your efficiency measures?
- What are your outcomes?

All department heads should know the answers to these questions for their own departments. The best department heads will also will try to understand the same for other departments.
Perform – and Tell People About It

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of children and young adults attending programs</td>
<td>13,899</td>
<td>25,665</td>
<td>20,785</td>
<td>21,181</td>
<td>21,181</td>
<td>24,464</td>
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<td>Number of materials borrowed</td>
<td>1,269,501</td>
<td>1,140,249</td>
<td>1,136,654</td>
<td>1,155,178</td>
<td>1,155,178</td>
<td>1,334,231</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of patron visits to library</td>
<td>910,620</td>
<td>911,920</td>
<td>890,909</td>
<td>861,164</td>
<td>861,164</td>
<td>994,644</td>
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Making a Difference

- Input: $75,000 annual public access budget
- Output: Resume classes (1,400 training hours)
- Outcome: 1,400 patrons improved job skills

- Input: 1.5 FTE staff for public access
- Output: Online business plans (accessed 600 times)
- Outcome: 490 patrons started businesses

- Input: 12 public access terminals
- Output: One-on-one help (2,130 requests fulfilled)
- Outcome: 8,371 patrons applied for jobs

http://impact.ischool.uw.edu/instruction-videos.html
New Braunfels – Connect To Compete

- Partnership with schools and non-profits to provide internet access to lower income households
- Libraries provide publicity, marketing and training/technical support
- Schools identify free and reduced lunches
- Nonprofits negotiate low hook-up and access rates
- Community Impact – education (near term) and jobs (long term)
Sacramento – Make A Difference Day

- Community partnership initiated by the media – News 10
- Turned apartment unit within an challenged apartment complex into a resource center
- Complex owners provided unit rent free
- Libraries provided computers and shelving
- Friends provided books, magazines and materials
- Adjacent facility beefed up internet access so the center could piggy back
- Project promises community improvement in crime, positive engagement, and educational attainment.
What are the realistic alternatives (and consequences) for budget reductions in a community facing significant budget gaps.
3. Be Sociable
You can’t deny, or ignore, the value of trust and longstanding friendships.”

Chief Charlie Deane
Prince William County Police Department
4. Keep the Manager Informed

transparency + engagement + performance + accountability = trust
Stakeholder Assessment

- The Beneficiary Chain
- The Food Chain
- Partners
- The Library
- Other Stakeholders
- Competitors
The Food Chain

• **Key Library Connection:** Funders

• **Examples:** City Council, a policy board, the state, grant agencies or any entity that provides money to the library
The Beneficiary Chain

- **Key Library Connection**: Direct Customers

- **Examples**: Patrons at the library, community organization receiving library services (inside or outside the library)
Partners

• **Key Library Connection:** Collaborators in delivering a program, product or service

• **Examples:** School that provides space for a library led program, vendors who provide products or services, workforce agency that provides staff inside the library
Other Stakeholders

• **Key Library Connection**: Impact *other than* direct customer or collaborator

• **Examples**: State library or budget office that regulates performance measures or data collection, advocacy groups or media that influence the library
Competitors

- **Key Library Connection**: Anyone providing all or part of the same services as the library

- **Examples**: Technology centers providing training, institutions providing summer programming
Stakeholder Assessment

• Break up into groups, one group each for Food Chain, Beneficiary Chain, Partners, Other Stakeholders and Competitors

• Who are the key community players (traditional and non-traditional) in your group?

• Identify the wants, needs, and expectations of the group based on those major issues facing communities.

• Identify current and potential library services that can satisfy those needs. What gaps need filling?
Stakeholder Assessment

- The Beneficiary Chain
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Be a Community Leader

1. Add value to your communities.
2. Take a long-term and community-wide perspective.
3. Commit to ethical practices.
4. Help build community and support democratic and community values.
5. Promote equitable, fair outcomes and processes.
6. Develop and sustain organizational excellence and promote innovation.

*Nalbandian, et al; PM Magazine, 3/07*
Rule Number Six

• Cartwheelers

• We Get In-Formation for You
Contact Information

Craig Gerhart
Gerhart Enterprises, Inc.

csgerhart@gmail.com
O: 703-494-1479
C: 703-498-7794