

# **THE SECRET SAUCE: COALITIONS**

**MCN ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OCTOBER 24-25, 2019**

**GOOD  
MORNING**

**IT'S TIME  
TO TAKE  
A STAND!**

**AGREE  
OR  
DISAGREE**

# TAKE A STAND: I LOVE THE STATE FAIR



# TAKE A STAND: ST. PAUL IS BETTER THAN MPLS



# TAKE A STAND: I AM A MORNING PERSON



# TAKE A STAND: I PREFER THE BEACH TO THE MOUNTAINS





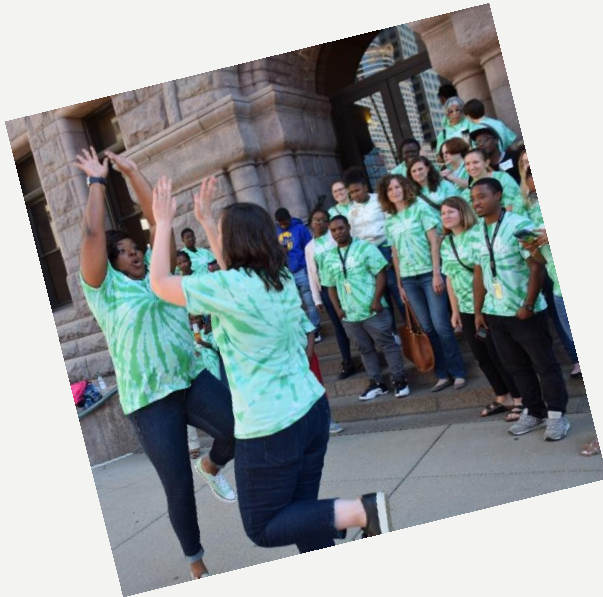
# TAKE A STAND: I LIKE WORKING IN COALITIONS



# TAKE A STAND: I LEAD OR HAVE LED A COALITION



**WHO ARE WE**



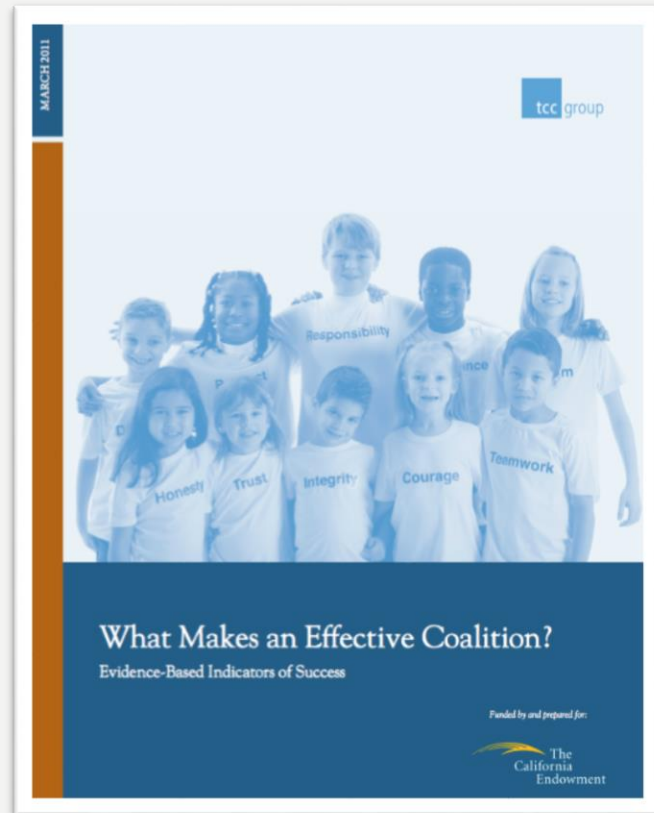
# IN THE NEXT 30-45 MIN...

- I. Talk about the research
- II. Compare our various coalitions
- III. Share our tips (not in the research)
- IV. Strive to engage you along the way



**WHAT DOES THE  
RESEARCH SAY?**

# JARED RAYNOR, TCC GROUP



## TCC Group Team and Acknowledgements

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Questions/comments on the report should be directed to Jared Raynor at: [jraynor@tccgrp.com](mailto:jraynor@tccgrp.com).

**[WWW.TCCGRP.COM/RESOURCE/WHAT-MAKES-AN-EFFECTIVE-COALITION-EVIDENCE-BASED-INDICATORS-OF-SUCCESS/](http://WWW.TCCGRP.COM/RESOURCE/WHAT-MAKES-AN-EFFECTIVE-COALITION-EVIDENCE-BASED-INDICATORS-OF-SUCCESS/)**

# WHAT'S A COALITION?

“An organization or organizations whose members commit to an agreed-on purpose and shared decision making to influence an external institution or target, while each member organization maintains its own autonomy.”

Mizrahi, Terry and Beth B. Rosenthal. 2001. “Complexities of Coalition Building: Leaders’ Successes, Strategies, Struggles, and Solutions.” *Social Work* 46(1): 63-78.



# IT'S A STRATEGY

Forming a coalition is a means to an end.

Something advocacy organizations do in order to achieve something else.

# **PROS VS CONS**

**IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE  
THE BENEFITS AND COSTS OF  
JOINING A COALITION?**

## Table 1

### Benefits and Costs of Membership in a Coalition<sup>16</sup>

#### Benefits:


- Networking
- Information Sharing
- Access to Resources
- Resource Pooling
- Involvement in Important Cause
- Shared Mission
- Ability to Attain Desired Outcomes
- Enhanced Visibility/Power in Numbers
- Enjoyment of Coalition Work/Camaraderie
- Personal Recognition
- Ability to Build Skills

#### Costs:

- Time
- Loss of Autonomy
- Compromise
- Expending Scarce Resources
- Unfavorable Image of Association
- Lack of Direction
- Reduced Visibility/Recognition
- Negative Exposure
- Middle-Ground Tendency
- Obscured Voices

# KEY CHARACTERISTICS: IT'S ALL ABOUT CAPACITY

1. Capacity of Coalition Members
2. Capacity of the Coalition
3. Outcomes/Impact of the Work of the Coalition



**“A COALITIONS  
CAPACITY IS  
INHERENT IN THE  
COLLECTIVE  
CAPACITY OF ITS  
MEMBERS”**

# **WHAT MAKES EFFECTIVE MEMBERS?**

**IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE SOME KEY  
CHARACTERISTICS THAT MAKE EFFECTIVE  
COALITION MEMBERS?**

## Capacities of Effective Coalition Members.<sup>11</sup>

- Skills/knowledge to work collaboratively
- Commit to the coalition in action as well as name
- Ability to articulate what you bring to the table (e.g., time, resources, access, relationships, reputation, expertise, etc.)<sup>12</sup>
- Ability to articulate what you want from the table
- Ability to weigh the value of coalition membership against scarce resource expenditure
- Willingness to share resources
- Willingness to openly identify conflicts between the individual organization and the coalition
- Willingness to share power/credit
- Willingness to speak as one
- Willingness to explore alternative ideas and approaches
- Willingness to dedicate staffing at a high enough level to make decisions
- Willingness to dedicate staffing to implement assigned tasks
- Strategic use of coalitions to fill critical gaps and leverage resources toward achieving your mission
- Willingness to commit to the coalition for an extended (relevant) period of time
- Understanding of how your issue fits into a broader network of issues

**HAVES  
VS  
WANTS**





# **CAPACITY OF THE COALITION**



**WINDOW OF  
OPPORTUNITY –  
LUCK OR  
STRATEGY?**

# **LOGIC MODEL**

**CRITICAL ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES  
FOR COALITIONS**

# 4 CENTRAL CHARACTERISTICS

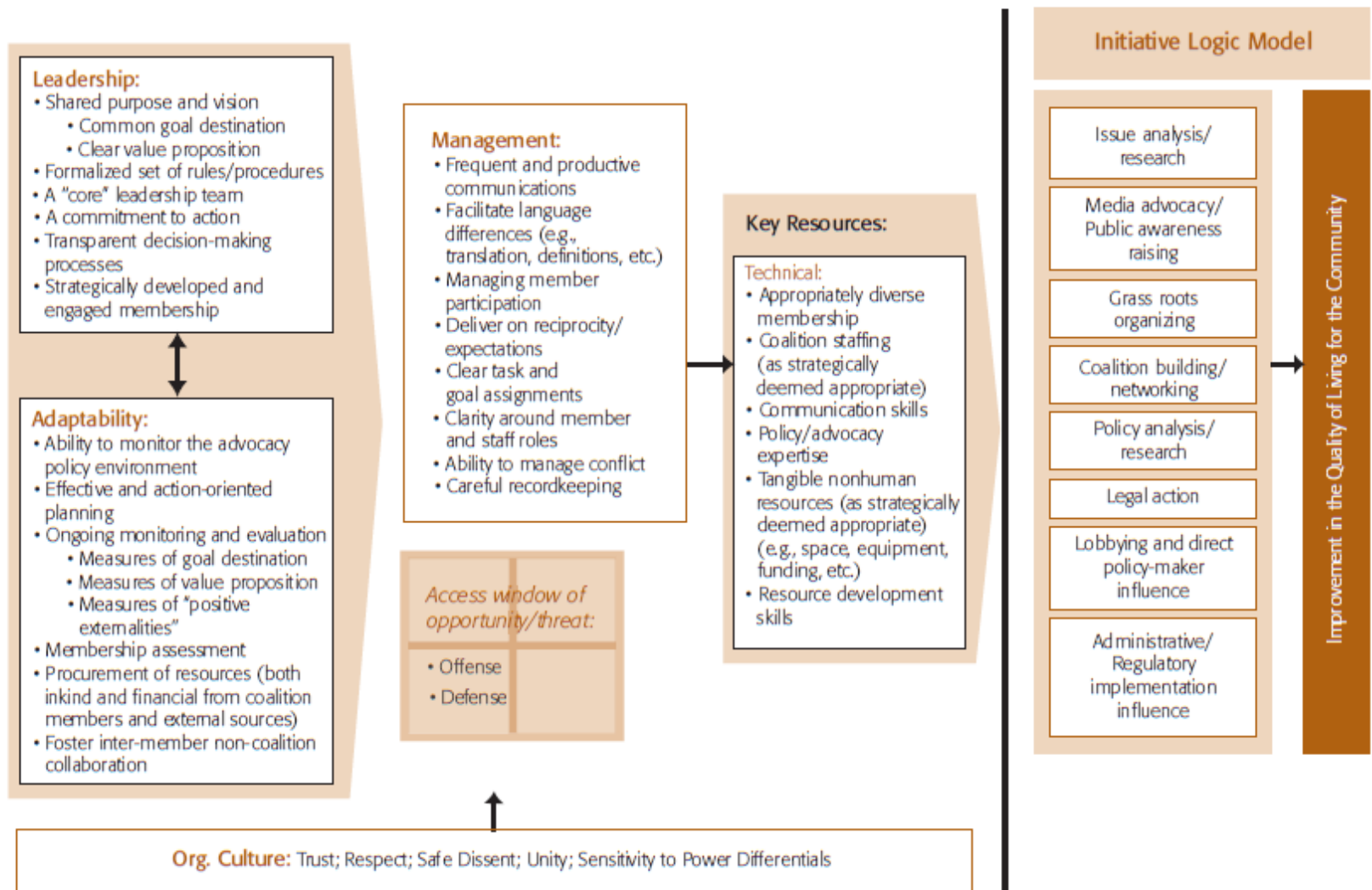
1. Leadership Capacity
2. Adaptive Capacity
3. Management Capacity
4. Technical Capacity

# CULTURAL CAPACITY / CHARACTERISTICS

“Unique history, language, structure, and set of values and beliefs. These elements all serve as the context through which organizations define, assess and improve their effectiveness.”

1. Trust
2. Respect
3. Safe Dissent
4. Unity
5. Sensitivity to Power Differentials

**Figure 5: Critical Organizational Capacities for Coalitions: The Logic Model "Inputs"**



## Leadership Capacities:

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- Shared purpose and vision
- Common goal destination
- Clear value proposition
- Formalized set of rules/procedures
- A "core" leadership team
- A commitment to action
- Transparent decision-making processes
- Strategically developed and engaged membership

## Adaptive Capacities:

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- Ability to monitor the advocacy policy environment
- Effective and action-oriented planning
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation
- Measures of goal destination
- Measures of value proposition
- Measures of "positive externalities"
- Membership assessment
- Procurement of resources (both in-kind and financial from coalition members and external sources)
- Foster inter-member noncoalition collaboration

## Management Capacities:

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- Frequent and productive communications
- Facilitate language differences (e.g., translation, definitions, etc.)
- Managing member participation
- Deliver on reciprocity/expectations
- Clear task and goal assignments
- Clarity around member and staff roles
- Ability to manage conflict
- Careful record-keeping

## Technical Capacities:

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- Appropriately diverse membership
- Coalition staffing (as strategically deemed appropriate)
- Communication skills
- Policy/advocacy expertise
- Tangible non-human resources (as strategically deemed appropriate) (e.g., space, equipment, funding, etc.)
- Resource development skills

# **WHO'S THE DECIDER?**

**WHAT TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING MODELS  
HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED?**



# **PROS VS CONS**

**WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF  
CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING**

## Table 2

### Pros and Cons of Consensus Decision-Making

#### Pros:

- Increases Commitment
- Empowerment
- Participation
- Overcome Resistance to Change
- General Satisfaction with Decisions
- Builds Morale
- Theoretical Message of Equality

#### Costs:

- Difficulty Defining Specific Tasks
- Slow/Time-Consuming
- Waiting to take action until all have spoken rather than when a decision has been made

# **WHAT NOT TO DO**

**WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS THAT CAN  
CAUSE COALITIONS TO BE LESS EFFECTIVE?**

## Seven Deadly Sins of Coalitions

- **Debate to Death:** Nitpicking and nuancing every bit of information or potential action resulting in a bias for arguing over action.
- **Social Orientation:** Commitment to the group as a group rather than the group as a vehicle for action with a clear goal destination and value proposition.
- **Avoidance of Conflict:** Mask dissent or disagreement in order to create harmony at the expense of thoughtful vetting and buy-in. One of the most valuable roles that a coalition can play in today's policy environment is to uncover sticking points and resolve them within the coalition as opposed to airing grievances publicly.
- **Lack of Technical Expertise:** Feeling that the coalition is a substitute for specific technical knowledge on things such as policy and advocacy work, fundraising, evaluation, etc. A coalition, in and of itself, is not advocacy, but rather a tool for generating effective advocacy. Coalitions need the skills and ability to conduct advocacy activities, which may be contributed by coalition staff or individual coalition members with specific advocacy skills (e.g., lobbying, grassroots mobilizing, media engagement, judicial intervention, etc.).
- **Turn it Over to the Staff:** Members play a passive role, leaving the work of the coalition in the hands of staff members (who might be employed by the coalition or dedicated staff from member organizations).
- **No Ongoing Role for Members:** Members in the coalition don't have specific tasks or assignments over time.
- **Dividing up Credit:** As the coalition makes gains, members try to take individual credit for success over the coalition ("I did more than you and am therefore more responsible.").

**COMPARE**

	<b>MN Smoke-Free Generation</b>	<b>Minneapolis Menthol Coalition</b>	<b>Breathe Free North</b>
Members	20 → 60 members Statewide Orgs Professional	50 members Smaller CBOs Scrappy	Diverse Youth African American LGBTQ
Success	Smoking Ban Tobacco Taxes E-cig Regulations	Citywide Menthol Restrictions (National Leader)	Fruit & Candy Flavored Tobacco Policy
On-going problem OR One-time goal	On-going	One-time (but could be resurrected)	On-going
Leadership Decision-making	Strive for consensus but steering committee to vote if needed	Executive decision-making with coalition input	Satellite coalition Youth decide how and when to engage
Adaptability	YES State & Fed	YES City & Wards	YES Schools & Neighborhoods
Management	Co-chairs Paid staff Accountability	Co-chairs with complimentary skills sets	Lots of “management” considerations (e.g., parents, transport, etc.)
Technical: Resources	Strategy Tech expertise (lobbying, paid media, comms)	Subcontracts to engage diverse memberships	Skills in youth engagement



**IN OUR  
EXPERIENCE...**

# TIPS FROM BETSY

- Decide on your deal-breakers upfront.
- Prioritize your work.
  - Even with the best coalition, you can't do it all.
- Give yourself a break. Take time to recharge.
- Find a friend.
- Learn from failure.



# TIPS FROM LATRISHA

- The window of opportunity might not be perfectly clear.
  - Trust your gut
  - Lean when to go for it and when to pump the breaks
  - When to PUSH your decision-makers and when to STOP
- Use your “downtime” in between campaigns to tend the garden.
  - Build your coalition base
  - Evaluate
  - Research the next campaign
- Bringing diverse representation to the table is an art.
  - Funding
  - Relationships and Trust
  - Authentic Participation

# TIPS FROM MOLLY

- Start with a community builder.
- In addition to the work, provide a unique hook.
- Give participants something they don't get in their day-to-day.
- Define the meeting purpose and stick to your agenda.
- Encourage and cultivate participation from all.
- When needed, find an outside facilitator to move through process.
- Recognize individual efforts and celebrate collective successes.

# TIPS FROM YOU



# QUESTIONS



# THANK YOU

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