EveryLibrary | 501(c)4 Political Action Committee
- Election Days and Negotiations
- Support for Legislative Agendas
- Outreach and Activism to the Public

EveryLibrary Institute - 501(c)3 Research and Policy Think Tank
- Research Agenda
- Training Programs
- Programmatic Partnerships and Coalitions
Theory and Practice
Theory of Advocacy

If your advocacy framework assumes an adversarial situation then you have a real problem.

- Education
  - What are libraries capable of today?
- Orientation
  - Who are librarians and library workers today?
- Ideation
  - What could a shared solution look like?
- Identification
  - What resources do we need in place to authentically collaborate?
- Activation
  - When will we both commit to a collaboration?
Advocacy is a long-game. It is focused on building relationships through an understanding a shared-values framework, purposefully aligning missions, and finding ways to realize a common vision for either people or a place.

Advocacy is....
A process that creates partnerships and coalitions around a common cause or concern.
Theory of Activism

If you are not willing to be focused on your own self interest and use an active voice, all you are is hopeful.

• Based in Shared Values
  • It affirms or offends a belief
• Focused on Shared Identity
  • It builds community
• Has Integrity
  • It is honest in its motivation and authentic in its goals
• Directs Activity
  • It uses verbs and speaks in the first person
• Organizes Supporters
  • It identifies, cultivates, and empowers
Activism is .... Strident actions that ask for - and expect - a change.

Activism is short but frequent values-system-focused and identity-focused messages that are intended to move people who are otherwise unaware or inactive about an issue or idea into a close personal alignment and identification with an ideal.
Political Frames
Funding for libraries is a political decision.

Directly or indirectly, how we choose to tax ourselves and what values are expressed in our budgets, policies, and programs are fundamentally political in nature.
Three Political Narratives

• Progressives
• Conservatives
• Libertarians

“The stories we like to tell ourselves” by Arnold Kling
My heroes are people who have stood up for the *underprivileged*.

The people I cannot stand are the people who are *indifferent* to the oppression of women, minorities, and the poor.
My heroes are people who have stood up for *Western values*.

The people I cannot stand are the people who are *indifferent* to the assault on the moral virtues and traditions that are the foundation for our civilization.
My heroes are people who have stood up for *individual rights*.

The people I cannot stand are the people who are *indifferent* to government taking away people’s ability to make their own choices.
What happens when you are variant from or at odds with your audience, your funding partner, or your decision-maker?
Supporters and Partners

How people are wired makes all the difference in your messaging and approach.
How people listen

Four ways that people are wired to care about... anything.

- Compassionately Engaged
  - Populations and people
- Pride of Place
  - Interesting, thriving, and prosperous
- The Data Shows It
  - Data about outcomes as lens
- Concerned or Fearful
  - Focused on filling gaps
Why people listen
Four factors that build parties and movements

“The Political Brain” by Drew Westin (2008)

• Shared Values
  • Does the campaign or candidate align with my deeply-held belief(s)?

• Shared Identity
  • Does the campaign or candidate represent me in some way?

• Personal Characteristics
  • Do I like the candidate or admire the campaign?

• Specific Policies
  • Will the candidate or campaign do what it says when I am not looking?
Who are the Allies of Activists?

Why someone is motivated to act on behalf of an ideal

• Relational Supporters
  • “Knows” libraries and librarians

• Ideological Supporters
  • Aligned with what librarians and library workers do

• Aversion Supporters
  • Would like to avoid bad outcomes based on principles or ideals

• Access Supporters
  • Motivated by feedback, praise, or gratitude
Stories that Resonate

Four potential approaches to root your campaign

- Stories of Success demonstrate your competency
  - Scale or replicate
- Stories of Failure demonstrate your integrity
  - Avert or fix
- Stories about people you care about
  - Find a common concern
- Stories about why you do what you do
  - Find a common cause
The Activist’s Playbook
Activist’s Guiding Principles

- Must focus on identifying, cultivating, and empowering supporters
- Must not focus on building users
- Must ask for and allow actions
- Must allow people to participate as donors, volunteers, and do-ers

Users are not necessarily supporters and supporters don’t need to be users.
Guiding Principles for Activists
• Collect Contact Information
• Create Pathways to Involvement
• Be Authentic
• Be Urgent
• Segment Your Audiences
• Ask Questions of Your Base
• Stay on Message
• People have one of three budgets to spend:
  • Money
  • Time
  • Good Name

• Marketing or advertising is marketing or advertising

• If it does not have an ask it is advertising not activism
Guiding Principles
• Collect Contact Information
• Create Pathways to Involvement
• Be Authentic
• Be Urgent
• Ask Questions of Your Base
• Stay on Message
• Segment Your Audiences
• AtoZ Databases and ReferenceUSA
• Facebook and other social media
• Analytics on Demand, Orange Boy “look alikes”
• Social Hacking
• Borrow
• Build

A Like or Share is Not an Activist
Focus Your Message and Differentiate Your Messages

HOW: Compassion, Pride, Concern

WHY: Shared Values, Shared ID, Policy

WHO: Relationship, Ideology, Aversionary

WHAT: Extend Success, Fix Failure
Focus Your Message

HOW: Compassion, Pride, Concern

WHY: Shared Values, Shared ID, Policy

WHO: Relationship, Ideology, Aversionary

WHAT: Extend Success, Fix Failure
Advocacy Principles
Advocacy Principles

• “Marketing Tomorrow” build use
• “Marketing Yesterday” builds support
• Programmatic Partners are unactivated allies
• Coalitions are core to advocacy campaigns
• You are the only expert on libraries and librarianship and you must define the negative
• No one will solve your budget or policy issue for you
• Marketing *tomorrow* to encourage use and uptake.

• Marketing *yesterday* to tell the story of your impact.

• Spend a few dollars and a few minutes every day to do it.
Funding-Focused Partnerships and Coalitions are based on:

- Shared Values
- Common Mission
- Aligned Vision

Coalitions are focused on funding or policy, not programming or services.
Who Else Cares?

• Economic Development
• Workforce and Re-tooling
• Early Childhood and Grade Level Reading
• COVID-Slide
• Housing and Food Security
• Safety and Violence
• Well-being
Your “Book” Carries Your Values, Vision, Mission:

• Strategic Plan
• Building Plan
• Technology Plan
• Budget
• Annual Report
Empowering Staff to Carry the Message:

- Your own values about libraries?
- Your own vision for your community?
- Why you do this work?
- What happens if you don’t?
Experts Must Define the Positive and the Negative

Talk about Plan B and Plan A

• Plan A = what happens if we are properly funded or empowered
• Plan B = what happens if we are under-funded or disempowered

Then please stick to it.
New Money only comes from four places: Reallocations, Outside Aid, New Taxes, or Cuts

New Policy or Legislation is introduced by an elected official but written by engaged stakeholders.
Taking Inventory

How to put this into practice
• During the ongoing COVID crisis, policymakers, elected officials, voters, and philanthropic funders want to see their money go to effective programs and competent staffing in ways that deliver results.

• They want to support programs and projects that can be measured and justified through data as well as stories.

• They are looking for the right way to apply funding and resources - whether taxes or philanthropy or grants - to solve problems.
What are the agendas of your elected officials and voters - and how does your library map to those agendas?

• Interesting Places
• Thriving Places
• Prosperous Places
• Avoid Duplicative Services
• Deliver Efficient and Effective Services
• Organization’s own budget.
• Members’ financial well-being.
• Scaling back up to support success.
• New revenue is needed.

• How do we put this new frame to work?
Questions, Comments, and Wrap-Up
Please use the chat box
From Advocacy to Activism

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