



everylibrary

Building voter support for libraries

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Planning a Warrant Article

Community Asset Building

NHLTA 2014

@everylibrary

About EveryLibrary

Founded on the fact that libraries, as public entities, cannot expend their own funds to do electioneering. “Info-Only” is allowed.

The IRS "caps" spending by Associations and other 501c3 charities for lobbying.

About EveryLibrary

Set up as a 501c4 Social Welfare Organization chartered to support library ballot measures.

Includes our support for legislation that impacts the ability of libraries to function as districts.

About EveryLibrary

EveryLibrary works with libraries to plan effective voter engagement:

- Pre-planning and polling
- Technical assistance with campaigns
- Staff, Trustee and Friends roles
- Timing issues in the public trust

Data that Frames Our Discussions

“From Awareness to Funding” says...

Voter Attitudes

Nationwide, of all voters¹:

37% will Definitely vote yes for the library

37% will Probably vote yes for the library

26% will Probably or Definitely vote no or
may vote either way.

1. OCLC From Awareness to Funding, 2008



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Why Talk Politics and Libraries?

When only 37% of likely voters say they will definitely support libraries at the ballot box it is necessary for you to become active.

Why Talk Politics and Libraries?

About a third of New Hampshire residents live in a town with a traditional town meeting, another third under SB2 rule, and the remaining third in communities with a city council.

Union Leader 16 Feb 2013

<http://www.newhampshire.com/article/20130217/NEWS0612/130219241/0/news01>

Voter Education Challenge

“The [New Hampshire] state municipal association examined 27 towns and found that an average of 2.4% of registered voters attended the deliberative sessions in 2010 and 25.5% of registered voters voted on the budget at the polls.”

Union Leader 16 Feb 2013
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Who Supports Libraries?

From “Probable” to “Super”

Civic Attitudes

94% of Parents say libraries are important for their children. 79% say “very important”.²

58% of Americans have a library card.³

62% of card holders have visited the library in the last year at least once.⁴

2. Pew, May 2013

3 and 4. Harris Interactive | ALA, January 2011

Library Use Does Not Matter

The research revealed an important distinction between the public library user and the public library funder. Not every library user is a library funder; not every library funder is a library user. **A voter's willingness to support increased library funding is not driven, or limited, by library use.** In fact, the advocacy research found that there is little correlation between frequency of library visits and willingness to increase funding for libraries.

- OCLC "From Awareness



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Library Use Does Not Matter

A voter's willingness to support increased library funding is not driven, or limited, by library use.

Library as Transformative Force

[T]he library is not perceived as just a provider of practical answers and information; the most committed supporters hold the belief that the library is a transformational force.

- OCLC "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-4

Attitude - Not Demographics

A crucial and somewhat unexpected finding from the segmentation analysis was that demographics and lifestage were not important constructs in the library supporter segmentation. In fact, demographics are irrelevant to library funding support. **The factors that determine residents' willingness to increase their taxes to support their local library are their perceptions and attitudes about the library and the librarian, not their age, gender, education level or household income. Library funding support is an attitude, not a demographic.**

Attitude - Not Demographics

The factors that determine residents' willingness to increase their taxes to support their local library are their perceptions and attitudes about **the library** and **the librarian**.

Who Supports Libraries?

- They are involved in their communities
- They recognize the library's importance to the community and to a child's education
- They are not always heavy users of the library, but believe the library is a noble place, important and relevant to the community
 - They see the library as a vital community resource like public schools, fire and police, and are willing to increase their taxes to support the library.
 - They recognize the value of a 'passionate librarian' as a true advocate for lifelong learning.

They recognize the value of a 'passionate librarian' as a true advocate for lifelong learning.

Voter Attitudes

What do we know about voters and libraries?

- Users vs. Non-Users
- Progressives vs. Conservatives
- Family Demographics
- Any Tax is a Bad Tax*

Nothing Impacts More than their Perception of the Librarian and the Library as Institution.

What Activates Voters?

Seven Factors:

- A Reason to Vote
- Mobilized
- Personal Contact with Candidate or Representative*
- Culture/Tradition/Habit of Voting*
- Trust in Government
- Decided to Vote
- Weather/Access to Polls

What Activates Advocates?

1. An Identified Need
2. Personal Motivation
3. Experience of the Issue*
4. Prior Success as an Advocate*
5. Institutional Reputation
6. Made a Pledge
7. Ease of Access to Advocacy Tools

Activate in Any Context

VOTERS:

1. A Reason to Vote
2. Mobilization
3. Personal Contact with Candidate
4. Culture/Tradition/Habit of Voting
5. Trust in Government (pro or con)
6. Decided to Vote
7. Weather/Access to Polls

ADVOCATES:

1. An Identified Need
2. Personal Motivation
3. Experience of the Issue
4. Prior Success as an Advocate
5. Institutional Reputation
6. Made a Pledge
7. Ease of Access to Tools

How We Activate Them

Run it like a Campaign

- Ground Game
- Endorsements and Allies
- Coalition Building
- Actively Ask

What Activates Voters for the Library?

#1 - Nothing Impacts Voter Behavior More than their Perception of the Librarian and the Library as Institution.

#2 - Awareness that there is a Warrant or Measure on the Ballot.

What Activates Voters for the Library?

The Librarian is the “Candidate”

The Library is the “Incumbent”

Library = Librarians + Community

The Campaign Team

Thanks for Running

“Campaign” Team

Public Employees on Public Time
or Representatives of the library acting in an
official capacity

- Staff
- Trustees
- Friends and “Super Friends”

Look Before You Leap

Ask Four Questions:

Q1: What community groups do you belong to?

Q2: Where do you live and where do you spend your time?

Q3: Who do you know who knows everybody?

Q4: Who are we missing?

Allies and Endorsers

Early contact is the difference

Inventory Your Allies

1. Educational Partners
2. Social Welfare and Religious Partners
3. Governmental Partners
4. Civic Partners
5. Business Partners
6. Politicians
7. Media

Inventory Your Allies

1. Educational Partners

Pre-K and K-12

College/University

For-Profit Tutoring

Private/Public After-School Programs

Three Messages: Library as Educational Partner,
Library as Resource Extender, Library as Gap Filler

Inventory Your Allies

2. Social Welfare and Religious Partners

Counseling Centers

Food Pantry / WIC

Jobs Training Center

Literacy Centers

Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts

Three Messages: Library as Resource Extender, Library as Third Place, Library as Start Point

Inventory Your Allies

3. Governmental Partners

City / Town Managers

Parks and Public Works

Public Safety – Police and Fire

Planning Departments

Three Messages: Library as Contact Place, Library as Info Point, Library in Common Cause

Inventory Your Allies

4. Civic Partners

Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis

Heritage and local history

GLBT, Immigrant and New Resident

Three Messages: Library as Social Leveler, Library as Neutral Good, Library as [insert organizational cause the library already champions]

Inventory Your Allies

5. Business Partners

Local Chamber / CVB

Startups and Entrepreneurs

Small Businesses – Service or Retail

Big Employers

Three Messages: Librarian as Business Reference
Resource, Library as Training Space, Library as Retail
Anchor

Inventory Your Allies

6. Politicians

Incumbents

Insurgents

Local, State, Federal

Three Messages: Library as Good Governance, Library as Responsible with Budget, Library as [insert their pet project]

Inventory Your Allies

7. Media

Local Print and TV

National Media

Bloggers

Key Messaging is always your campaign themes and talking points

Ask for Endorsements

- Your allies...
 - Become your endorsers
 - Become your funders
 - Become your volunteers
- The person who asks is the individual “closest to” the potential endorser.
- Ask early. Ask often.
- Plan to Publicize

Who is in Your Community?

Identify *community leaders* with 5 quick questions

Q1. Why is the library important to you, personally?

Q2. What is your favorite reason to use the library?

Q3. Who does the Library serve?

Q4. Why is the library important to those people?

Q5. What will new funding do to serve those communities?

Messaging that Works

The Library as....

Remember – “Use” Does Not Matter

To Library Users:

- “As you know...”
- Personal Value Proposition
- Value for Other
- Activation for the library

To Non-Users:

- “As you can imagine...”
- Value to/for “the other”
- Satisfaction/Activation

Voter see the Library as a “Transformative Force”

The Library as...

- Educational Partner
- Economic Development Engine
- Social Leveler
- Place of Discovery
- Personal Refuge

“Perception of the Librarian”

Nothing Impacts Voter Behavior More than Their Perception of the Librarian and the Library as Institution.

“The Passionate Librarian”

I am the Librarian who....

... find a job

... learn to read

... connect with family

“Our Librarians Who....”

“The Candidate’s Representative”

Your own story, your own biography, about why you serve on the library board matters.

What is your best story about helping an individual or the community ‘change’?

What You Can Do, Starting Tomorrow

3 | 3 | 3 | 3

Community Engagement

Get the Staff out of the library

- Surveys
- Programs and Events
- Service Delivery

Improve customer service

- Training and Role Playing
- Ramp Up the Social Media
- Check Policies that Get in the Way

Community Engagement

Surveys

- Community Assessment Survey
- Strategic Planning Surveys
- Key Stakeholder Surveys

Community Engagement

Programs and Events:

- Programs that support your allies and endorsers
- Programs that expose your staff to new people
- Programs that encourage civic engagement

Community Engagement

Service Delivery:

- New resident visits
- Embedded librarians with key allies
- Library Card Sign-up Month*

3 | 3 | 3 | 3

Days | Weeks | Months | Years

Your To Do List:

- 3 Days: Start spending on LIKES; Show off the staff on social media
- 3 Weeks: Do the Personal and Community “inventories”; Set that first new meeting and have two with old allies
- 3 Months: Walk a Precinct; Library Card Sign-ups
- 3 Years: Convene the “Library Coalition of THIS PLACE”

Thank You

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