

From Isolation to Conversation Talking with the Community

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Recorded Webinar Sessions:

- [Part 1: Plan your project](#)
- [Part 2: Interviewing logistics](#)
- [Part 3: Analysis & use](#)

(Copy this Field Guide and use to along with the recordings to walk through your own project.



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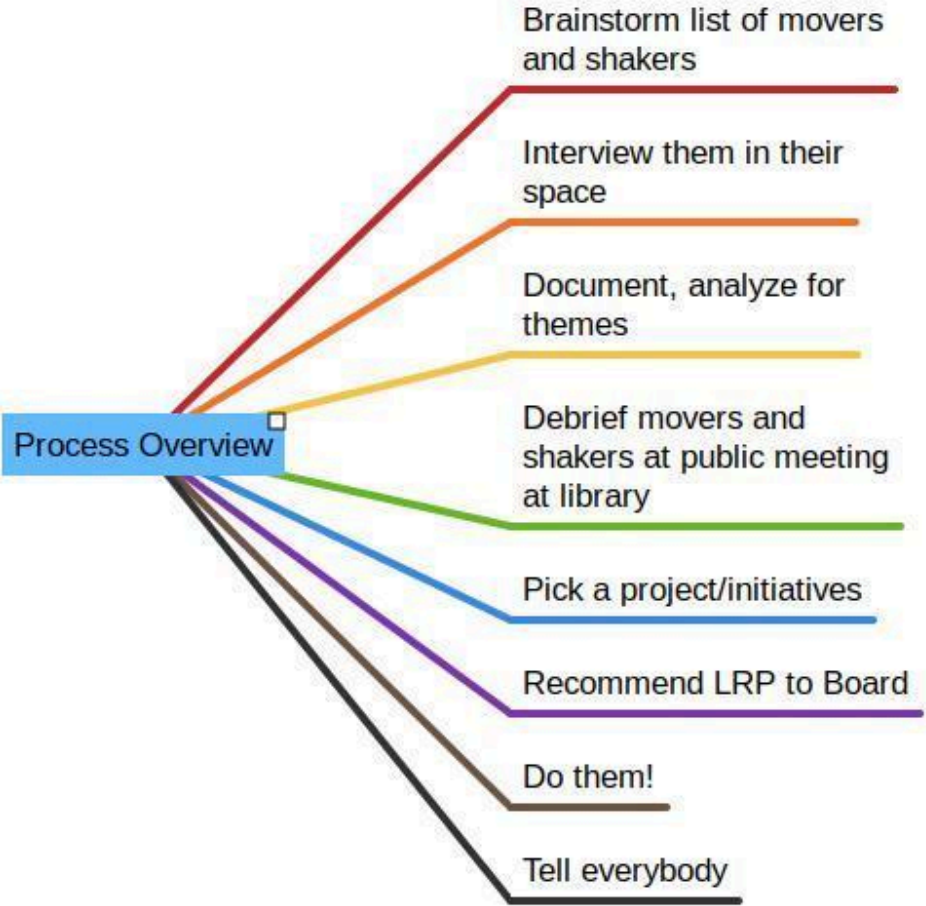
Part 1: Plan to Talk to Your Community

Potential uses

- Strategic planning
- Environmental scanning
- Director orientation
- Staff development
- Post pandemic connections
- Relationship building
- Earning support through demonstration of values
- Other _____

Notes

Process Overview



Notes

Barriers and Strategies

What questions might people have? How might you respond?

Board or governing authority

Staff

Community

Other _____

Notes

Movers and Shakers (35-50 names)

Sample Categories:

- **Business.** Who are the main employers, or activists within the business community?
- **Civic.** Every community has civic groups like Rotary, Optimists, or the Lions.
- **Education.** Who are the prominent leaders--principals, superintendents, communication directors--in the community?
- **Elected.** Who are the key elected officials?
- **Faith-based.** Who are the leaders of some of the larger or influential churches, synagogues, mosques, or other houses of worship?
- **Government.** Who are the non-elected, or appointed officials who get things done?
- **Media.** Some of my most enlightening interviews have been with people who do interviews.
- **Non-profit.** There are many, many not-for-profit groups, often with deep expertise about various issues.
- **Marginalized.** Who always gets left out?

Notes

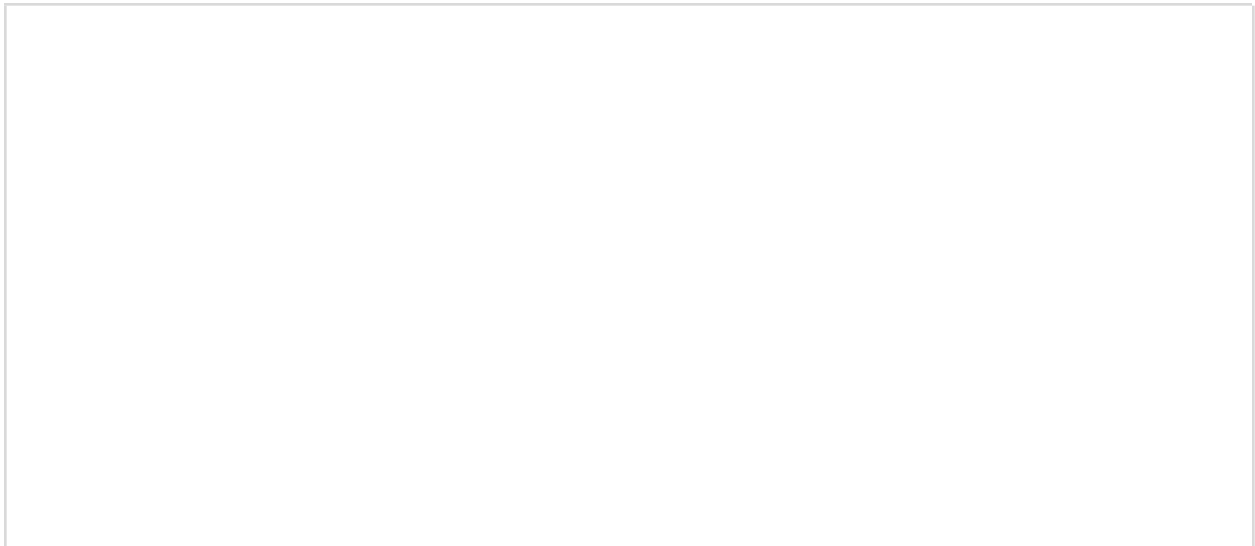
Establishing your team and timelines

Who? (Best to have two staff per interview - one to interview, one to record. Better to have director and staff, not board or volunteers - unless you need interviewers!)

When? (Capacity = time to complete. How many 1 hour interviews, plus travel time, per week or month?)

How to keep on track? (Set project management team meetings - weekly, twice a month, etc.)

Notes



Part 2: Interviewing Logistics: Cataloging the Community

Managing the Interview Process

- Set up interview (script)
- Call/email/reminder
- Conduct interview (be prompt!)
- Follow-up (thank you and reminder of debrief)
- Enter data using the [form](#) (use ... to make a copy of this template)
- Project management meetings

Set Up the Interview

1. Contact each stakeholder (email or phone)

Script suggestion:

- “We’re reaching out to you because you have been identified as a community leader. We want your insights and wisdom.”
 - “We have 5 (6?) questions and it will take about an hour.”
 - “We’ll be asking you about your insights about community concerns.”
 - “We’d like to meet at your place of business, or your choice for a meeting place.” Not the library! Or, schedule a phone or web call.
 - “Later, we’ll be presenting these results back to the community.”
2. Update the interviewee spreadsheet with the interview schedule.
 3. Call or email reminder 1-2 days prior to the interview. (Some people like the questions in advance.)

Notes

Conducting the Interview

Community Stakeholder Questions

1. How did you get here? (What's your story?)
2. What is your personal passion?
3. As you think about your constituents, what are the issues that most matter to them over the next 18-24 months?
4. What are your aspirations for the community?
5. Who else should we talk to?
6. (Other)

Interview Tips

- Thank them, Introduce yourself, give them your cards, get right to it
- Follow the form (either printed or online)
- Ask follow-up questions (this is a **reference interview**)
 - ◆ Who *are* your constituents, and what do you know about them?
 - ◆ Can you expand on?
 - ◆ Can you clarify....?
 - ◆ Is anyone else working on these issues with you?
 - ◆ Other examples....
- They keep talking about the library!
- Thank them again, say they'll hear from us later about the debrief.
- Other?
- If they ask, "Why are you here?"
 - ◆ To understand the environment in which we operate
 - ◆ To look for places where we can *add value*

Remember

- You're listening and probing, not talking. *Not marketing.*
- You're not asking about the library. That's OUR job.
- But you'll see quickly how we can help.
- Have fun!

Entering the Data

- Best is to do online (type into the [form](#) while in the interview - select ... and make a copy of this template)
- Or within a day or so of interview (because you forget)
- In both cases, have your partner review
- Record their words (don't shortcut or rephrase)
- During review, highlight or bold *key words*, e.g. **unhoused people**
- Add “who else should we talk to” to [Interviewee spreadsheet](#) (make a copy of the template)

Project Management Team Meeting - Debrief your experiences and track progress – 15 minutes

- How long are they taking?
- Do we need more?
- Any new interview tips
- Emerging themes (to highlight in the future)
- Issues or concerns

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To Do Before Part 3

- Download or create [Interviewee spreadsheet](#) and [Form](#)
- Start setting up as many interviews as you can
- Conduct your interviews
- Enter interview answers into online form

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Part 3: Analysis and Use: Making Meaning

Data Analysis Logistics

1. Google form populates ⇒ Google spreadsheet
2. Format cells (upper left, wrap)
3. Can Copy whole column, paste into *simple* text editor (Notepad, TextEdit) to strip Sheets column markers into plain text
4. Copy and Paste into word processor (restores word wrap, lets you highlight)
5. Distribute internally as desired for input and clarification
6. Read, reread and highlight common topics or phrases
7. Reread and identify possible sub-categories of topics
8. Share and discuss with others reviewing the content for themes

Additional Analysis Tools

1. White board discussion - draw mind maps to distinguish trends and relationships between categories and subcategories.
2. Word Cloud - copy all text into a word cloud tool online. Words used more frequently are sized larger which can illuminate key topics
3. Mind Map Online (e.g., Freeplane <https://docs.freeplane.org/home.html>)

Notes

Public Debrief: Setting the Community Agenda

1. Invite
 - a. All those you interviewed
 - b. Library board of trustees
 - c. Staff/senior staff (depending on library size)
 - d. Press
2. Walk through the results (use visuals to illustrate and illuminate)
3. Ask
 - a. Is this right? Revise? Add to?
 - b. Who is working on this now?

Staff Discussion of Initiatives

- Is this in the library wheelhouse?
- Can we be good at it?
- Will it move the community forward?
- How will we measure and report on these efforts?

Follow-up over 1-3 years

- Determine budget needs
- Get budget approval by the board
- Keep your promises to the community
- Keep pushing the message: how we add value to our community

Notes

Questions? Ask Us!

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