Building & Managing Effective Coalitions

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference
February 4, 2011
What’s a Coalition?

- Multiple constituencies or constitute groups collaborating to advance a common agenda or policy objective

- Tool for all levels of policy advocacy:
  - Local, Regional, State, Federal

- Many Varieties & Management Structures
  - Formal, Informal
  - Single Issue, Multiple Issue
  - Short-Term, Long-term
  - Participant-led, Staff Managed
Effective Coalitions: Why bother?

• Address Challenging Political Environment
• Demonstrate Broad Appeal: Strength through Diversity
• Create Political Advantage with Policymakers
• Raise Issue Awareness and PR Value
Effective Coalitions: Why bother?

• Share the Burden
• Increase Intelligence; Leverages Strength of a Network
• Use Strengths, Core Competences of Partners
• Support (or Changes) Issue Framing
• Invigorate Supporters
Effective Coalitions: What Drives Success?

- Clear Purpose – Know what success looks like
- Clear Roles for Partners & Leveraging Key Partner Assets
- Regular Communication
- Robust Partner Engagement and Action
- Common Strategy Driven by Collective Input
- Prepare for, Acknowledge Conflicts
- Flexibility, Nimbleness in Response to Changing Environment
- Share Success
Effective Coalitions: Overcoming Obstacles

- Fear of New Partners
- “Care and Feeding” Costs, including Opportunity Costs
- Loss of Control
- Fear of Diluting Message, Agenda
- The Credit Game
- Let’s Make a Deal … Who Speaks for the Group? How does the Group Negotiate?
For More Information

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