

# Chapter 4

## Partnership Development

### Who should be involved?

Consider the diversity of the coalition members. The goal when creating a coalition is to be as diverse as the community you are serving. Think of organizations and individuals who might be interested in the issue or are already involved with your issue. Consider organizations that are professionally, politically, demographically, geographically, or functionally interested in the issue. What service professionals could help your effort through in-kind support? Printers, accountants, media public affairs folks, graphic artists, and writers might all provide help.

Consider the size of the coalition. More resources may be needed initially for a larger group and it may take longer to come to a group identity and common purpose. The coalition can grow over time. Initially you need a critical mass of sufficient energy to start the coalition and create enough activity or success to attract other members.

Make a list of potential coalition partners. Try to identify stakeholders, formal and informal leaders, and community organizations.

Consider the type of members. The coalition needs to decide whether or not to have individual members as well as member organizations. In addition, the right people from the organizations must be recruited, ideally, someone whose membership in the coalition could be part of their job and who has the power to act on behalf of the member organization. There will be different levels of commitment. The following are suggestions of the types of organizations to include in a childhood immunization coalition:

Local Businesses ( insurance companies, business associations or chambers, restaurants, fast food chains, pharmacies, supermarkets).

Charities ( March of Dimes, non-profit organizations focused on children's issues)

Child Advocacy groups

Children's Entertainment: Children's museums, amusement parks, toy stores

Community Service Groups (Kiwans, Rotary, Juniors League, etc.)

Hospitals and Health Clinics-Public or Private

Health Care Providers ( medical associations, nurse associations, parenting centers, community

health care centers, health education centers, midwife associations, medical schools, nursing schools, public health programs, etc.)

Minority or Ethnic Community Organizations

Elected Officials

Religious Organizations

Federal Government Agencies or Programs ( USDA extension service, WIC, VISTA, Head Start, Indian Health Service, Medicaid)

Food Banks

Homeless Shelters or Homeless Advocacy Groups

Labor Unions

Media Outlets

Law Enforcement Organizations

Day Care and School Organizations (PTA)

Local Colleges or Universities

Teacher Organizations

Seniors Organizations

Women's Organizations (civic and professional organizations)

YMCA and YWCA

## **Recruiting Private Sector Organizations**

There is no one reason why private sector groups are motivated to help with any issue. For some, it is truly a humanitarian concern. For others, it is a sense of community responsibility - they profit from the community and now want to give something back. Some organizations and business earmark a percentage of money or resources each year to community or charitable organizations. These businesses see it as a part of their role as members in good standing with the community. Still

others see participation as a good marketing opportunity to reach potential customers and get greater exposure to a particular market.

Whatever the motivation, all of them are valid, even if only to that group's members. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Just keep in mind as you seek out new private sector participants that what motivates one group does not necessarily motivate all. Like any good salesperson, it helps to know what motivates your customer.

Soliciting a group to become involved does not have to be a complicated or mysterious process. But to be efficient with whatever time you have available to contact and involve private sector groups, it helps to have a process that is nearly automatic and can be reduced to a checklist.

✓First, develop an information packet that describes the need for your program. This packet should include a fact sheet, a list of coalition members (if available), and a wish list of activities.

✓Then, develop a list of local business and community organizations that have something to offer. Good member participation, a good track record on other issues, or they have a particular resource you need. Get a contact name, phone number and address for each entity. The phone book, the local Chamber of Commerce, and city hall are good sources for making your list. For each group or business, determine exactly what you are going to ask from them, or what type of program or participation you'd like them to do. There's no guarantee you'll get what you ask for, but if you don't ask, you'll be guaranteed to not get what you want. Remember, all they can say is No.®

✓Next, figure out who is the best person to make the solicitation. Maybe it's someone with good contacts, maybe it's someone with the gift of gab®. In some cases, it may simply be the person who has time to make some calls.

Before making the first contact, try to determine why each particular group might want to participate. Jot down your reasons so you can refer to them when making the first contact or solicitation.

✓Then go ahead and make the first contact. There is no right way. Either a letter or a phone call will do. But whichever you use, be sure to tailor your approach individually for each group. What is appropriate to one set of people may seem overly informal or unprofessional to another.

✓Quickly follow up your first contact with a meeting. Your enthusiasm will convey a sense of importance and urgency about the issue. Know what you want and make suggestions of how they can be involved. Provide them with information on the issue as well as on the various ways to play a part. Make it in their self-interest. Have your first suggestion be a program they can perform internally toward their own employees or members, Their response might provide you with clues as to how much else to ask for. Seek a specific commitment.

✓After your meeting, send a letter confirming the details of their commitment. Include in the letter

each program or strategy they agreed to pursue, by what date certain actions are to be performed, and why you or your office has agreed to do to assist them. This will keep misunderstandings and disappointment to a minimum. Follow-up the confirmation letter with a phone call, reaffirming, their commitment and giving you an opportunity to say Athanks@.

✓Then say in touch. Follow their progress, encourage them, provide sufficient qualities of materials they may need, put them on your newsletter mailing list, and continually remember your thank you-s.