

Massachusetts Ocean Partnership

Skills For Effective Collaboration Workshop

Boston Fish Pier Exchange Conference Center

Thursday January 29th, 2009

Introduction

What does it mean to “collaborate” on public issues? Patrick Field, Managing Director of the Consensus Building Institute (www.cbuilding.org), introduced workshop attendees to the spectrum of collaborative methods utilized to build consensus on complex multi-party issues (<http://www.massoceanpartnership.org/documents/CBICollabSkillsPresentation01-29-09.pdf>).

These collaborative methods include:

- Exploration of the issues to inform and educate;
- Consultation to scope issues and ideas;
- Advisement to shape and narrow options;
- Decision-making; and
- Implementation to accomplish the task.

Why is collaboration important? Stakeholders want to understand and be involved with the process that leads to implementation of a plan affecting them. Effective collaboration can lead to greater stakeholder support and sustainability of a plan.

The many challenges to collaboration include:

- Incompatible interests;
- Clash of values and identities;
- Process factors (unequal representation/control of power, competition);
- Disagreement on facts; and
- Negative relationships (historic tensions, lack of trust, communication difficulties).

What can we do about these challenges? Try to build consensus through the collaborative negotiation process.

The Mutual Gains Approach

The Mutual Gains Approach to collaborative negotiations attempts to develop a win/win situation amongst negotiating parties in order to create a lasting, sustainable agreement that stakeholders can support. This approach has 4 steps: preparation, value creation, value distribution and follow through.

Good preparation is crucial to successful negotiation because it increases the ability to get what you want from negotiations. Research shows that stakeholders don't prepare enough (or in the wrong ways) for effective negotiation.

Schedule	Event Activities
9:00-9:30	Introduction to Collaborative Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does it mean to “Collaborate” on Public Issues?• Challenges in implementing collaborative processes
9:30-10:15	Case Analysis Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mel's Marina• Understanding Interests, BATNAs, and Priorities
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:00	Interactive Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutual Gains Approach• Consensus Building Process• Skills for Communication
11:00-12:15	Collaboration Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mel's Marina, continued• Develop Options for Possible Mutual Gain• Application to Mass Ocean Planning
12:15-12:30	Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lessons from the Day• Additional Challenges for future Workshops• Evaluation
12:30-1:30	Lunch and MOP Updates



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How does one properly prepare for negotiations? Stacie Nicole Smith, Senior Associate and Director of Workable Peace at CBI, stated that good preparation involves focusing on stakeholder *interests*, not *positions*. Stakeholder interests are often more compatible than stakeholder positions and focusing on interests can diffuse position incompatibilities. This leaves negotiating parties with more to talk about in their search for common ground, helping to move the negotiations process forward. Stakeholders should be knowledgeable about their own interests and should, to the best of their ability, be knowledgeable about the interests of the other parties involved as well.

Also key to proper negotiation preparation is knowledge of your BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement). A BATNA helps guide negotiations by making stakeholders aware of fall-back options. Your BATNA is your best alternative option if negotiations fail. Having a good BATNA gives stakeholders good fall-back options and can be a source of power in negotiations. Alternately, having few “good” fall-back options (a suboptimal BATNA) means stakeholders must work extra hard to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. Successful negotiators not only know their own BATNA, but also have an educated guess regarding the BATNA of others at the table.

Value is created when negotiating parties find solutions that are mutually beneficial. These solutions can be developed by exploring the interests (not positions) of those at the table to understand priorities and differences and to develop options. Salient, credible information can then be developed and lead to a variety of options. These options can bring about mutually beneficial solutions, distributing value.

Case Analysis Exercise

Attendees of the workshop participated in an analytical exercise exploring a sample public permitting issue that involved numerous stakeholder groups (<http://www.massocceanpartnership.org/jan09.html#0129>). Participants were asked to identify interests, BATNAs, key issues for negotiation and priorities of the stakeholders. Participants discussed their findings and their challenges.

Skills for Effective Communication

“You communicate not what you say, but what people hear.”

– Lynn Scarlett, Undersecretary, U.S. Dept. of the Interior

Effective communication is paramount to successful negotiations. To demonstrate the complexities of effective communication, workshop attendees were asked to participate in a simple communication exercise requiring informative speaking and good listening. A volunteer attempted to give the audience verbal instructions in an effort to replicate a simple drawing. Challenges experienced in the exercise illustrated the challenges of effective communication.



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Patrick Field described a few fundamental components for effective communication that include:

- Listening (not speaking, asking questions, or paraphrasing);
- Conveying (being clear, concise, constructive, as straightforward as possible and not provocative); and
- Attending to the situation (time of day, noise level, speed of speech, etc.).

In-person communication gives the opportunity chance for clear communication (not email or phone) because the fundamentals listed above can be included.

Mr. Field acquainted the audience with the two “mental models” that most everyone is guilty of using, but can lead to ineffective communication: fundamental attribution error and ladder of inference. These mental models explain why two people can see the same thing, but describe it differently. Both of these models are based on the idea that we explain the behavior of others using our own assumptions and conclusions— whether or not these assumptions and conclusions are correct. Not all stakeholders will see things the same way. Only by “walking in the shoes of others” can we begin to understand their point of view.

Effective collaboration works best when there’s trust and hidden agendas undermine trust. Building trust requires stakeholders to:

1. Share information;
2. Mean what you say and say what you mean;
3. Follow through on promises and commitments;
4. Be clear and consistent; and
5. Behave as you would want others to behave.

In closing, Patrick Field reported that the CBI stakeholder interviews would soon be available to all interested parties. He expressed the hope that EEA would allow stakeholders to develop ocean management planning options before the final plan is promulgated. Any suggestions for future workshops should be forwarded to Patrick Field at CBI or Howard Krum at MOP.

During Lunch: Howard Krum, MOP Communications Manger, and Nicholas Napoli, MOP Science Program Manager, updated everyone on MOP progress with our support of the MA ocean management planning process. Their complete PowerPoint presentation, a video of this workshop and all supporting documentation can be accessed through the MOP January, 2009 calendar page at:

<http://www.massocceanpartnership.org/jan09.html#0129>



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In Attendance:

Adler, Bill: MA Lobstermen's Association

Bauermeister, Alexandra: Environmental Defense Fund

Boger, Matt: MA Ocean Coalition

Bonifacio, Tricia: MA Ocean Partnership

Bowen, Sean: MA Department of Agricultural Resources

Brooks, Priscilla: Conservation Law Foundation

Conley, Lisa: House Committee on the Environment

Cowie-Haskell, Ben: Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Daskin, Joshua: MA Bays Program

Field, Patrick: Consensus Building Institute

Garpow, Wendy: MA Bays Estuary Association

Harrison, Adrienne: NOAA Coastal Services

Jewell, Paula: MA Bays Estuary Association

Krum, Howard: MA Ocean Partnership

Mack, Linda: MA Association of Conservation Commissions

Morrill, Micaelah: Office of Senator Robert O'Leary

Napoli, Nick: MA Ocean Partnership

Nicholson, Betsy: NOAA Coastal Services Center

Pingaro, Dan: Sailors for the Sea

Przynski, Nick: House Committee on the Environment

Race, Kayla: House Committee on the Environment

Rex, Andrea: MA Water Resources Authority

Smith, Stacie Nicole: Consensus Building Institute

Smrcina, Anne: Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Starbuck, Kim: MA Ocean Partnership

Swasey, Jill: MRAG Americas

Titcomb, Polly: House Committee on the Environment

Uiterwyk, Kristin: Urban Harbors Institute

