
Wholonomy Consulting: Partner Mapping and Community Engagement

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

- Antoine de Saint Exupéry

What is Partner Mapping?

Partner Mapping is a process designed to help organizations explore what could be possible if they expanded their collaborative work through a community engagement effort. It aims to help them discover new opportunities and resources that are made possible by partnering to reach a shared goal.

In developing this community engagement tool, we have taken a step-by-step approach, dividing the work into eight stages. The full document provides instructions for each step, plus helpful templates for organizing your work.

8 Stages of Partner Mapping

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7	Stage 8
team	shared goal	area	partners	people	interviews	next steps	conversations

Stage 1: Form a team to help with the partner mapping process. This team will assist in brainstorming potential partners, eventually reaching out to, and meeting them. The team can be comprised of board members and/or staff.

Stage 2: Articulate a wide goal; it is more likely to be shared by others. For example: creating a healthier community, or increasing youth resilience are wide goals. Narrower goals that could limit potential partners include: reducing smoking, or preventing teen pregnancy. At this early stage of exploration, forming a wide goal is the most useful for identifying potential partners.

Stage 3: Define the geographical area for your exploration. This could be a neighborhood, community, city or state.

Stage 4: Brainstorm potential partner organizations, like businesses, government agencies, other nonprofits, funders, churches, neighborhood associations, etc.

Stage 5: Contact people in the organizations identified in *Stage 4*, and ask to meet or talk on the phone.

Stage 6: Hold interviews with change makers from the organizations contacted in *Stage 5*. Your goal is to ascertain which of those organizations actually would prove a good fit, which share a common goal, which share values, and which are interested in exploring partnering.

Stage 7: Assess what you have learned. Groups that have done this have found immediate ways to collaborate with new partners toward shared goals. What could you begin doing right now? Did you find out about existing groups you could see joining? Did the people you interviewed want to meet with others?

Stage 8: If there is interest in forming a new multi-organizational collaboration, then it may be time to convene a community conversation.

Go to www.wholonomyconsulting.com and click on the Collective Impact page to download the full Partner Mapping documents:

Building Capacity for Collective Impact Toolkit:

- Part 1: Description of the Partner Mapping Process
- Part 2: Forms and tools for the partner mapping process Partner Mapping

Resources:

- Jane Wei-Skillern and Sonia Marciano, *The Networked Nonprofit*, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Spring 2008:
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_networked_nonprofit/
- Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania and Mark Kramer, *Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work*, Stanford Social Innovation Review, January 26, 2012:
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work