





Metropolitan Group

the power of voice

Successful Bond and Levy Campaigns



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Metropolitan Group crafts strategic and creative services that empower social purpose organizations to build a just and sustainable world.

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Assumptions and Top Tips

1. Traditional **promotional publicity is not enough**
2. Effective **library communication** and **community-centered programming** are the **foundation for successful funding**
3. High-profile library **programs** and **PR** activities are **vital to building** the ongoing **support** needed for communities to invest
4. **Framing the library as vital to other key community needs** is vital to long term support (*public will building*)
5. For the library voter, **the library is the most trusted messenger**
6. Recent customers are more likely to vote yes—the **the best way to win is to build the customer base**



What is success?

More than just a win on election day!

- **Foundation for ongoing** community engagement and stakeholder **investment**
- **Groundwork** laid for private **philanthropy**
- Substantial **new** and **expanded** relationships
- **Building community demand** for quality services





Why do people vote yes?

- **Direct and obvious benefit to them**
 - Or their constituents, family or community
- **Alignment with their values**





Four Key Steps



Listen



Demonstrate



Communicate



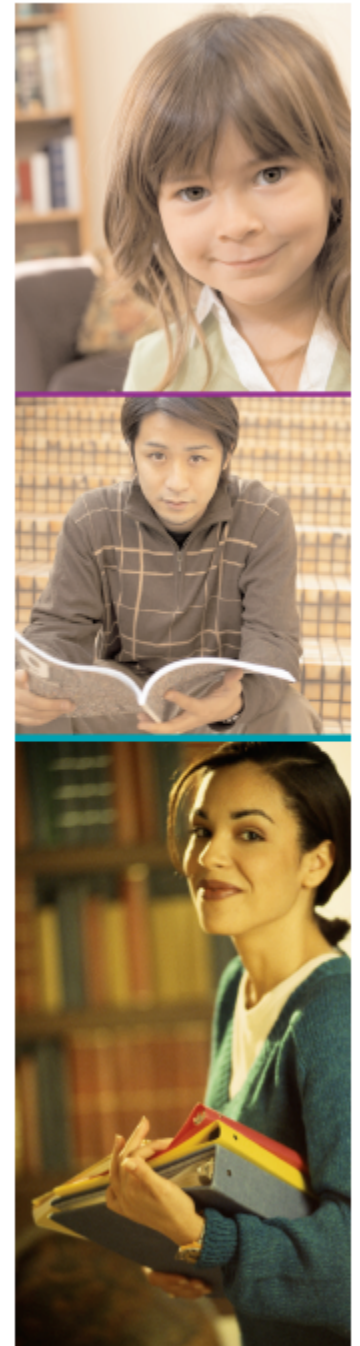
Advocate



Ask questions and then

 **Listen**

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Listen

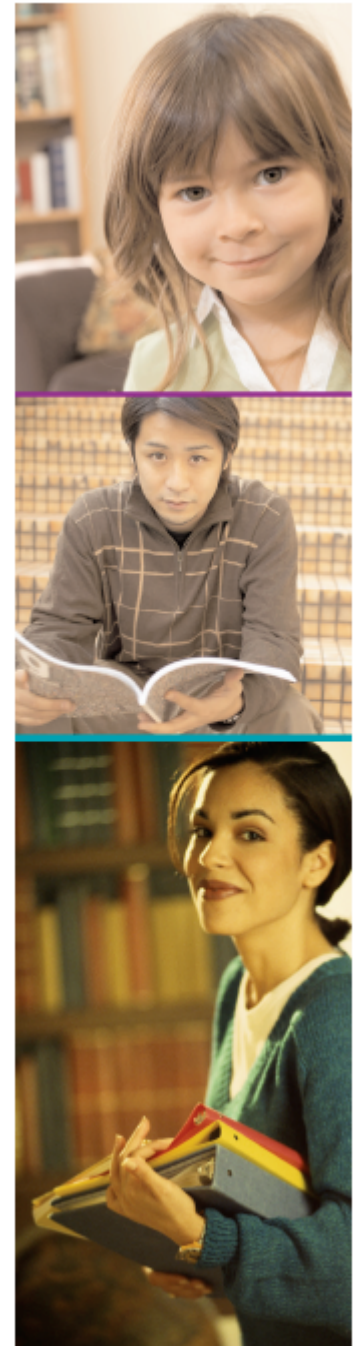
[The campaign started long ago]

Library:

- Engage community members in defining the library they want
- Consider consumer research
 - (telephone surveying for baseline of support, focus groups to probe understanding and needs)
- Start early by thinking of regular planning cycles as part of your communication campaign

PAC:

- Poll early (and as things unfold)



**Show you were listening
by demonstrating your value**



Demonstrate

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Demonstrate

Library:

- Show the community you heard them
(don't just tell them)
- Program like crazy leading up to and throughout a campaign cycle *(use = support)*
- Demonstrate the impact at the branch level
(what's in it for them)

PAC:

- Quiet phase
 - raise money
 - point to library successes
 - leverage programming to help you make the “ask”



Share what you learn and what the plan does



Communicate

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Communicate

Library:

- **Educate** your base about **how the bond/levy is responsive to what the community wants**
- Leverage communication **channels of partners and allies** to educate key audiences
- Use **programming as a storytelling** opportunity
- **Show AND tell** the impact at the branch level
(*what's in it for them*)

PAC:

- Keep the **library in the spotlight** (*let **THEM** do the talkin'*)
- **Build allies and endorsers** and **prep their communication channels** for advocacy later
- **Raise money**





A word about “messaging”

- Nobody wakes up wanting to spend more money in taxes
 - Long-term support is not achievable with a simple slogan
 - Complex request
- Need to show relationship between what they **already value** and what you have to offer
- **Burden of Proof is yours**
 - can't assume people will make the linkage between what you've offered and what they care about
 - **you** have to **make that link for them**
 - Must have blended proof: reason +emotion that are evidence of satisfaction of the audience's needs
 - Must tie to existing closely held community values





Framing your message

- **What will the audience receive in exchange** for the investment made?
- *Nearly* everyone cares about at least one of these things:
 - **Education**
 - **Health**
 - **Community**
 - **Business/Economic viability**
 - **Getting a good return on their investment**
- Use themes to talk about the library's programs, services, resources
- Give concrete examples based on your audience
- Remember, it's all about them. . . *not you*





Libraries. . .

- are at the center of a **vital, stable, livable community**
- **are an essential resource for educating our children and for the lifelong learning** of everyone in our community
- **help people live healthier lives**
- **are a valuable resource to our business community** and support the vitality and economic health of our community
- **are an excellent return on community investment**

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Mobilize the voter and ask for the yes vote!



Advocate

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A vertical banner for the 'yes Libraries!' campaign. The top section features a photograph of two young girls smiling, with one holding a small library card. Below the photo is a light blue background with the text 'yes Libraries!' in a stylized font, where 'yes' is in a green circle. The middle section shows a photograph of two men, one of whom is a police officer, standing together. Below this is a red banner with a white checkmark and the text 'VOTE YES for LIBRARY'. The bottom section has a white background with the word 'EDITORIAL' in red. The main headline reads 'Library system needs your 'yes' vote'. The body text begins with 'Next Tuesday, residents of Jefferson County finally will get the chance to vote on the proposed tax increase to support the Louisville Free Public Library system. We strongly encourage Business First readers to cast their ballot in support of the referendum. A "yes" vote is a vote for the future of our community. It's a vote for our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids. Libraries are an essential piece of the educational fabric of a community. Access to books, computers, reading programs and other services offered by the library is the



Advocate and get out the vote

PAC:

(Ask for the vote!)

- Do the work the library can't
- Build supporters early and use them now
 - Leverage their communication channels
 - Give people a way to get involved
 - Focus on persuasion targets (those who aren't the base supporter) who are movable
 - Invest resources on GOTV (use your allies!)

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yes Libraries!

✓ VOTE YES for LIBRARY

EDITORIAL

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Questions?

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