

# Collaboration: A Strategy for Surviving in Tough Times



FIELDSTONE  
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Presented by

Fieldstone Alliance

and

The Society for Nonprofit Organizations

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# Presenter



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[www.FieldstoneAlliance.org](http://www.FieldstoneAlliance.org)

# Webinar Agenda

1. Trends and the four types of strategies
  - Define collaboration, and the pros and cons of collaborating in tough times
2. Probing deeper into collaboration: is it the right strategy for right now?
  - The people, the stages and the structure
3. Addressing problem areas for a more nimble collaboration
  - Trust, leadership, and decision-making

# 1. Trends and strategies

## Trends and the four types of strategies

- Define collaboration and the pros and cons of collaborating in tough times

# Response Trends

- ⦿ In the 90's, most increased fundraising efforts; some also modified staffing costs
- ⦿ In the early 2000's, increased fundraising; also expanded programs, fee for service, coalitions



# Today -

- ◎ The needs are so pervasive, the changes so dramatic, that all options need to be on the table.
- ◎ Requires great leadership, a comprehensive and deep analysis, and openness to every type of opportunity.



**“I see a modest surplus  
in the fourth quarter...”**

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# Coping with Cutbacks: The Nonprofit Guide to Success When Times are Tight

Based on real life strategies nonprofits use to address financial challenges.

Contains 185 solutions to:

- Cut or control costs
- Increase revenues
- Structural strategies
- Engagement strategies

From *Coping with Cutbacks* by Emil Angelica and Vincent Hyman. *Publications can be ordered at [www.FieldstoneAlliance.org](http://www.FieldstoneAlliance.org)*

# Financial Strategies to Cut or Control costs

- ◎ Analyze purchasing
- ◎ Adjust payables
- ◎ Evaluate facilities and infrastructure
- ◎ Modify staffing and related costs
- ◎ Reduce services

# Financial Strategies to Increase Revenues

- ⦿ Manage money differently
- ⦿ Increase fees
- ⦿ Initiate or accelerate fund-raising
- ⦿ Expand or add services
- ⦿ Increase productivity

# Structural Strategies

- ① Modify the mission
- ① Modify the organization's structure
- ① Modify the organization's culture

# Engagement Strategies

- ⦿ Engage other nonprofits
- ⦿ Engage the community
- ⦿ Engage the business community
- ⦿ Engage the public/government sector

# Strategy of Engagement

- Working in concert with others to create a common vision and to share the resources necessary to turn that vision into a reality
- Partnering with organizations in any and all sectors to address the issues in the community
- Seeking a better blending of the values of all sectors

**Structural**

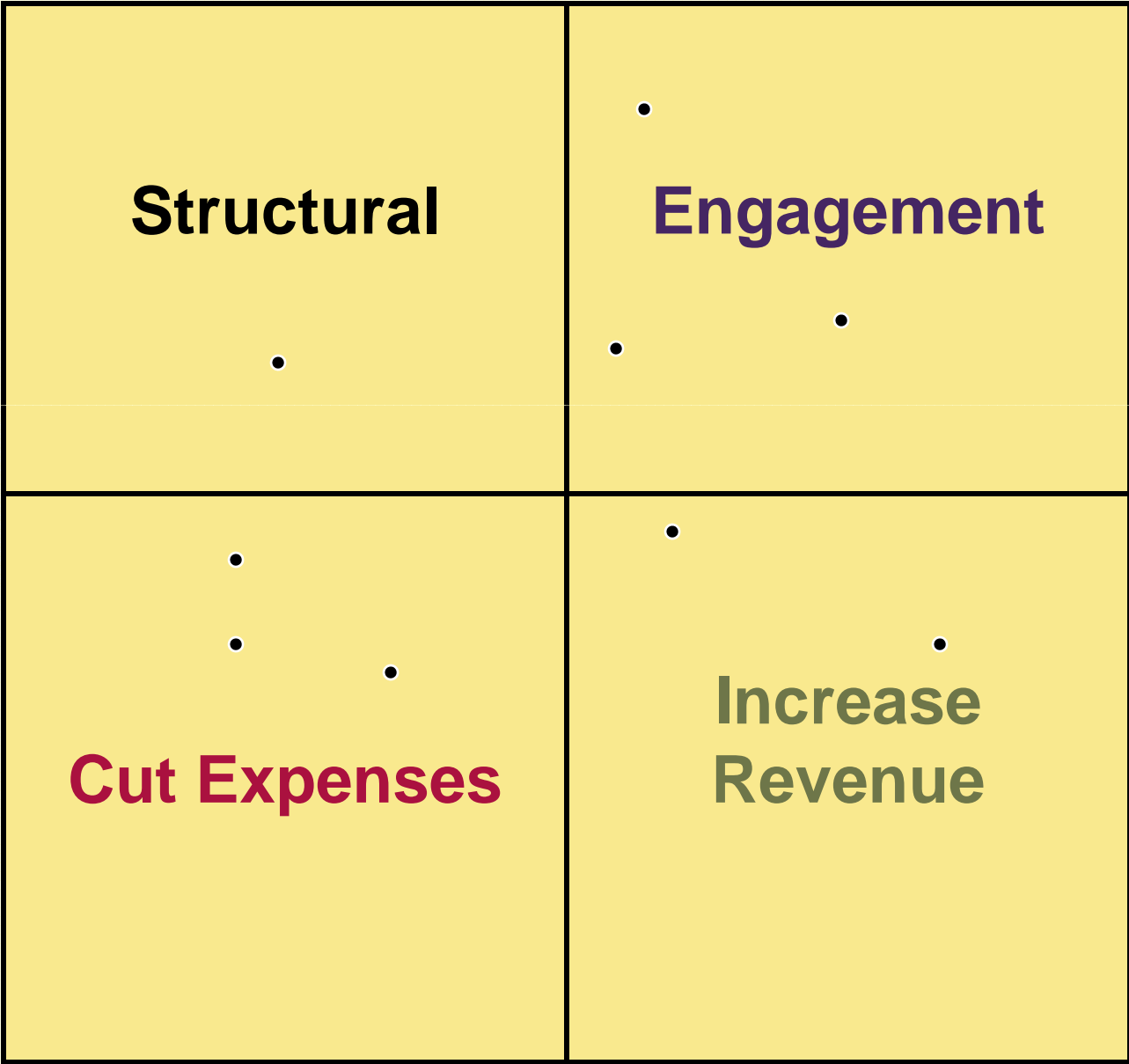
**Engagement**

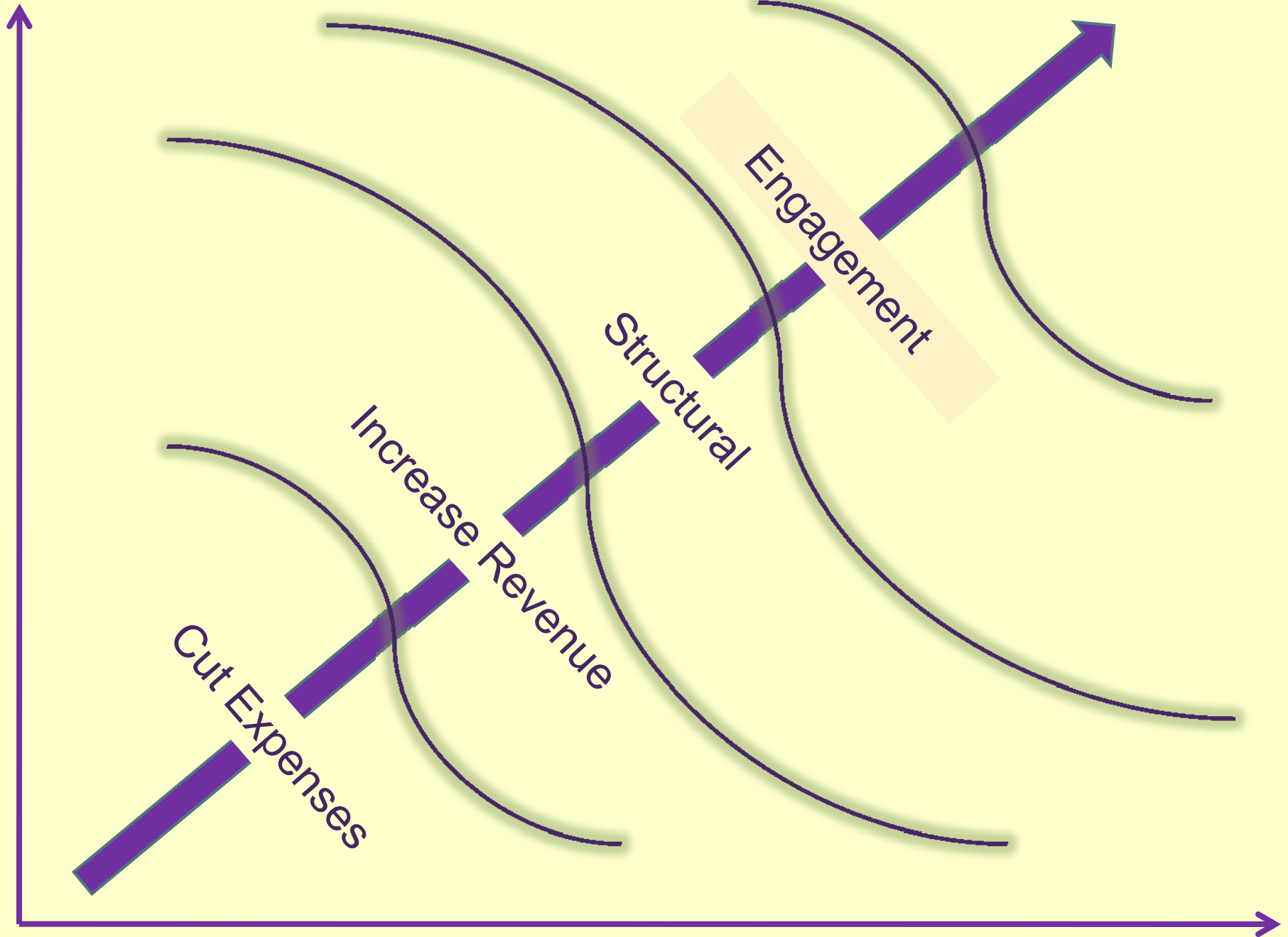
**Cut Expenses**

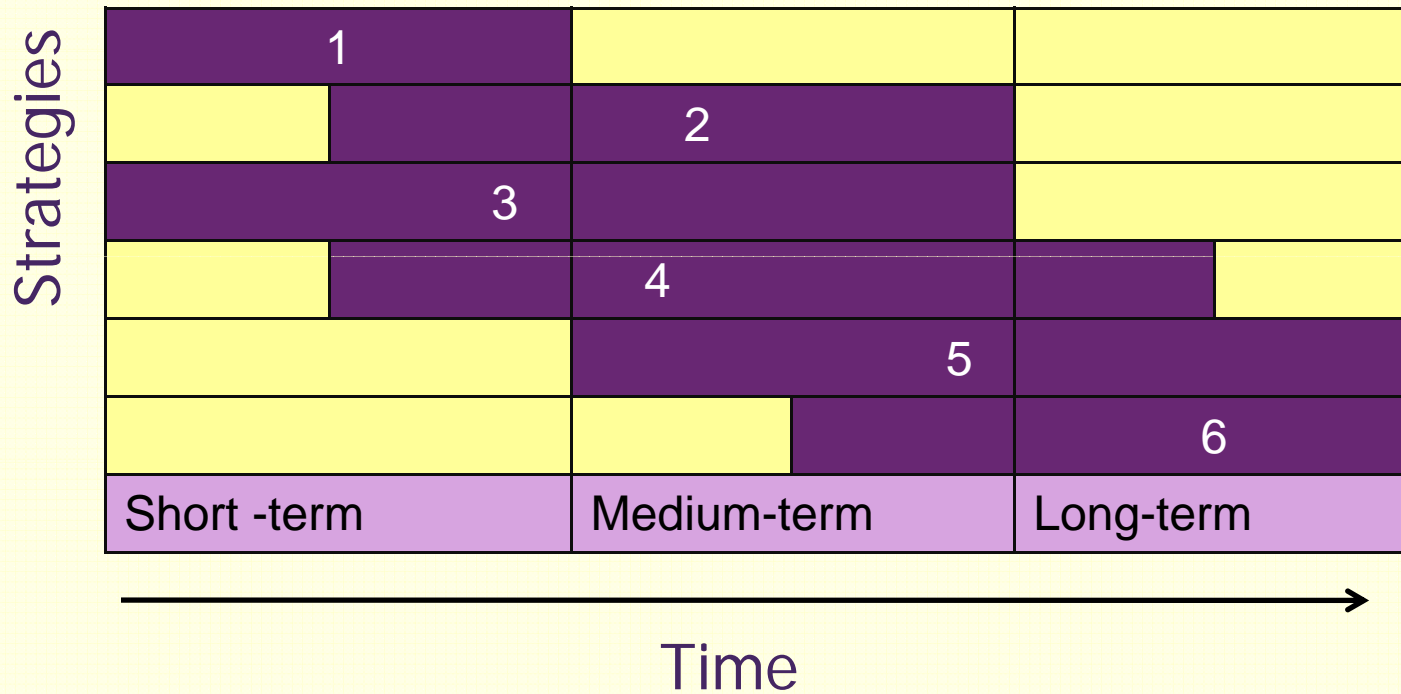
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**Increase Revenue**

-







# Collaboration Defined

**Collaboration** is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

*The relationship includes a commitment to:*

- ◆ shared goals
- ◆ a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility
- ◆ mutual authority and accountability for success
- ◆ sharing of resources, risk, and reward

# The “Intensity” of Partnership

## Cooperation

- Shorter-term informal relationship
- Shared information only
- Separate goals, resources and structures

## Coordination

- Longer-term effort around a project or task
- Some planning and division of roles
- Some shared resources, rewards, and risks

## Collaboration

- More durable and pervasive relationships
- New structure with commitment to common goals
- All partners contribute resources and share rewards & leadership

# Potential Impact

- ⦿ Further the mission: increase resources, scale, and reach
- ⦿ More accessible, effective services
- ⦿ Systems and policy enhancements
- ⦿ Increased visibility and influence
- ⦿ Operating efficiencies
- ⦿ Build relationship for future collaboration

# Increasing Challenges

- Time-consuming
- Turbulent economic times
- Long, multi-year projects
- Process easily derailed
- Slow, complex layers of decision-making
- Created by mandate

# When Not to Collaborate

- ◆ Unclear vision, desired results
- ◆ Lack of leadership
- ◆ Incompatible missions, timeframes
- ◆ Questionable capacity in partners
- ◆ Lack of organizational support
- ◆ Political minefield
- ◆ Expected costs exceed benefits
- ◆ Collaboration as destination, not vehicle

# *Discussion:*

*Is collaboration part of the solution for your organization?*

*Why or why not?*

*How can you analyze the potential?*

## 2. Probing deeper

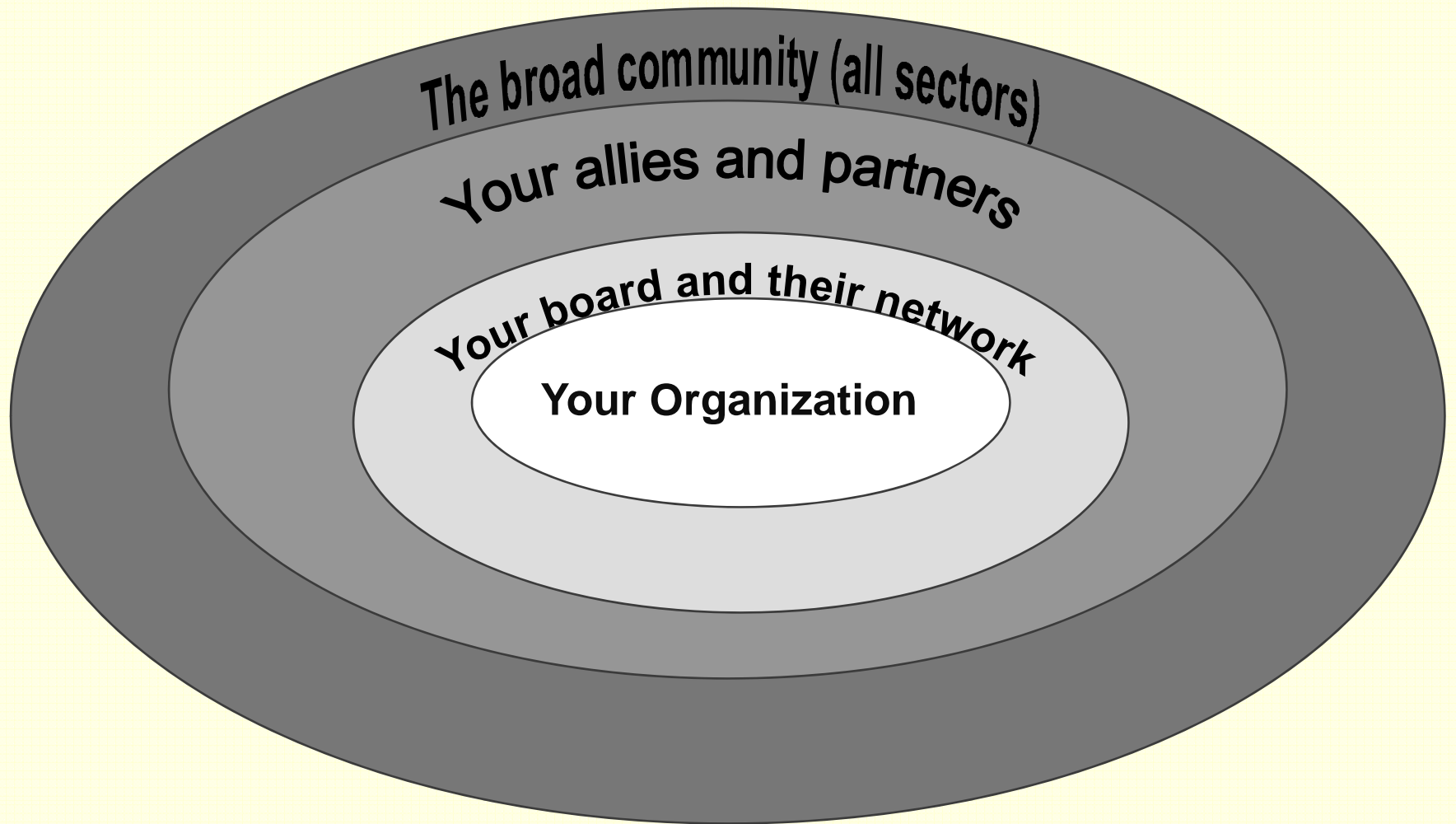
Probing deeper into collaboration: Is it the right strategy for right now?

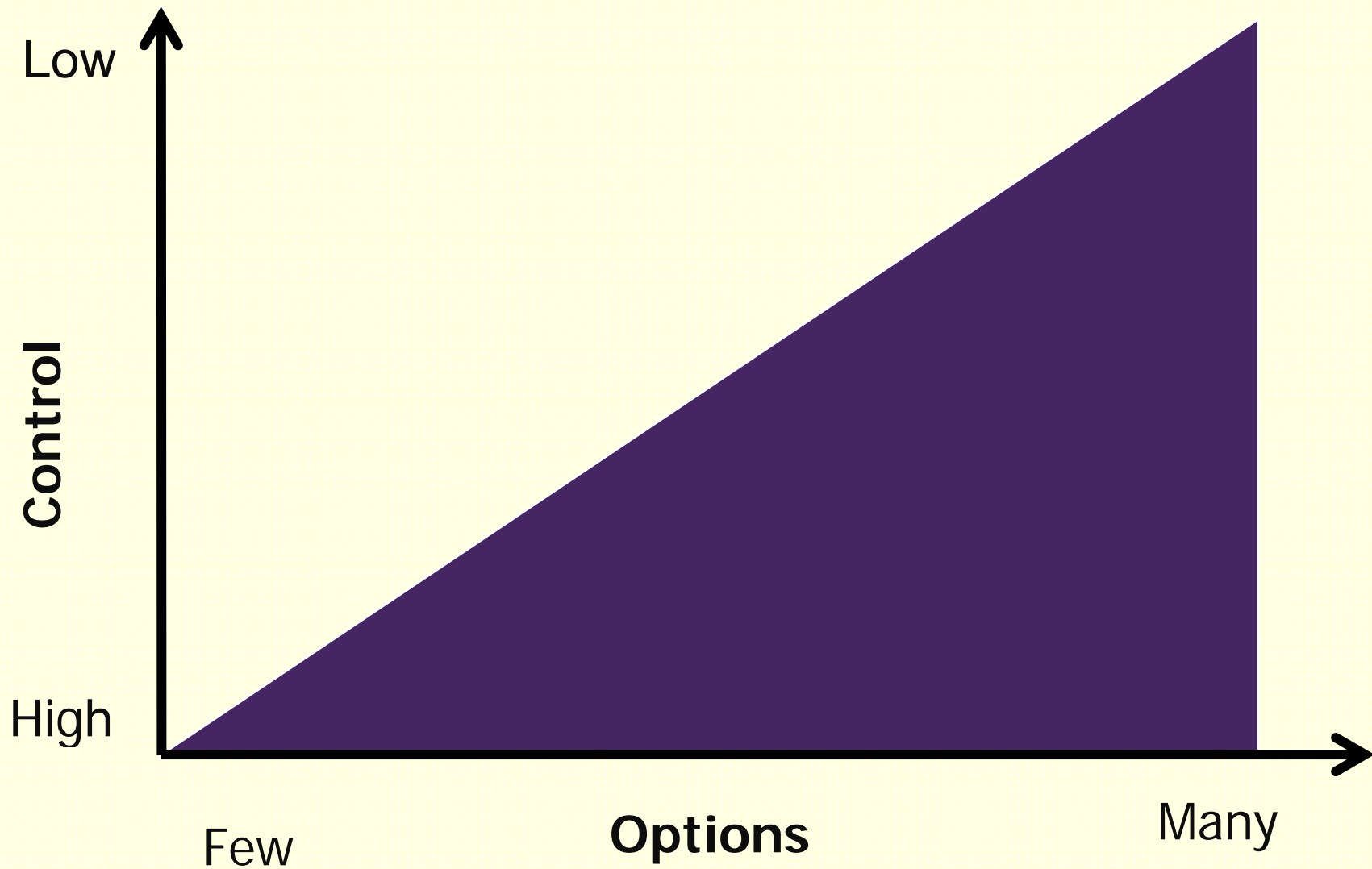
- The people, the stages and the structure

# Probing questions

- What could we possibly achieve together?
- When is collaboration the right strategy?
- How do we get started?
- Do we have the right people at the table?
- Have we agreed on our shared purpose?

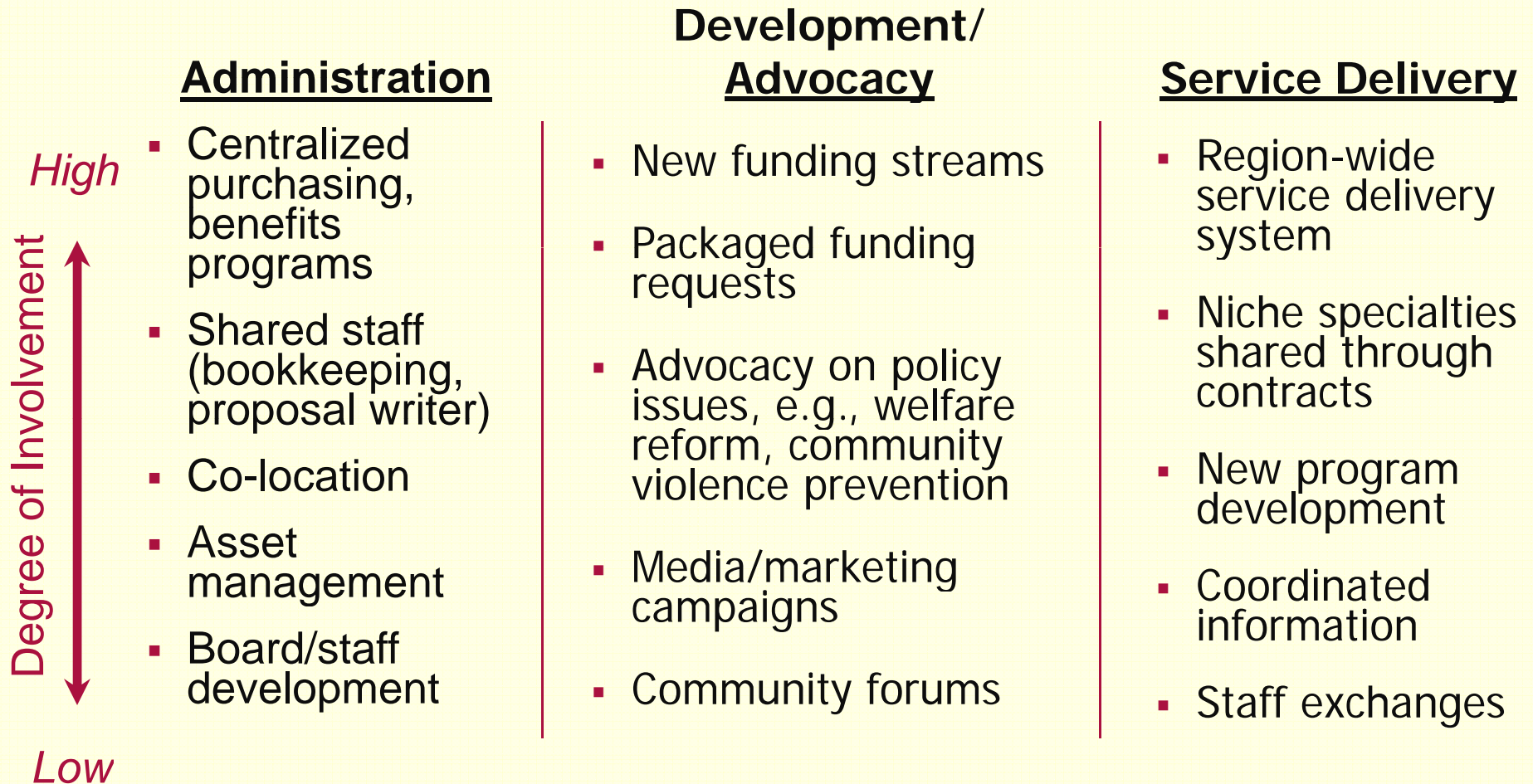
# Arenas of Influence





Options increase and control decreases as you seek solutions deep in the community.

# Purposes of Collaboratives

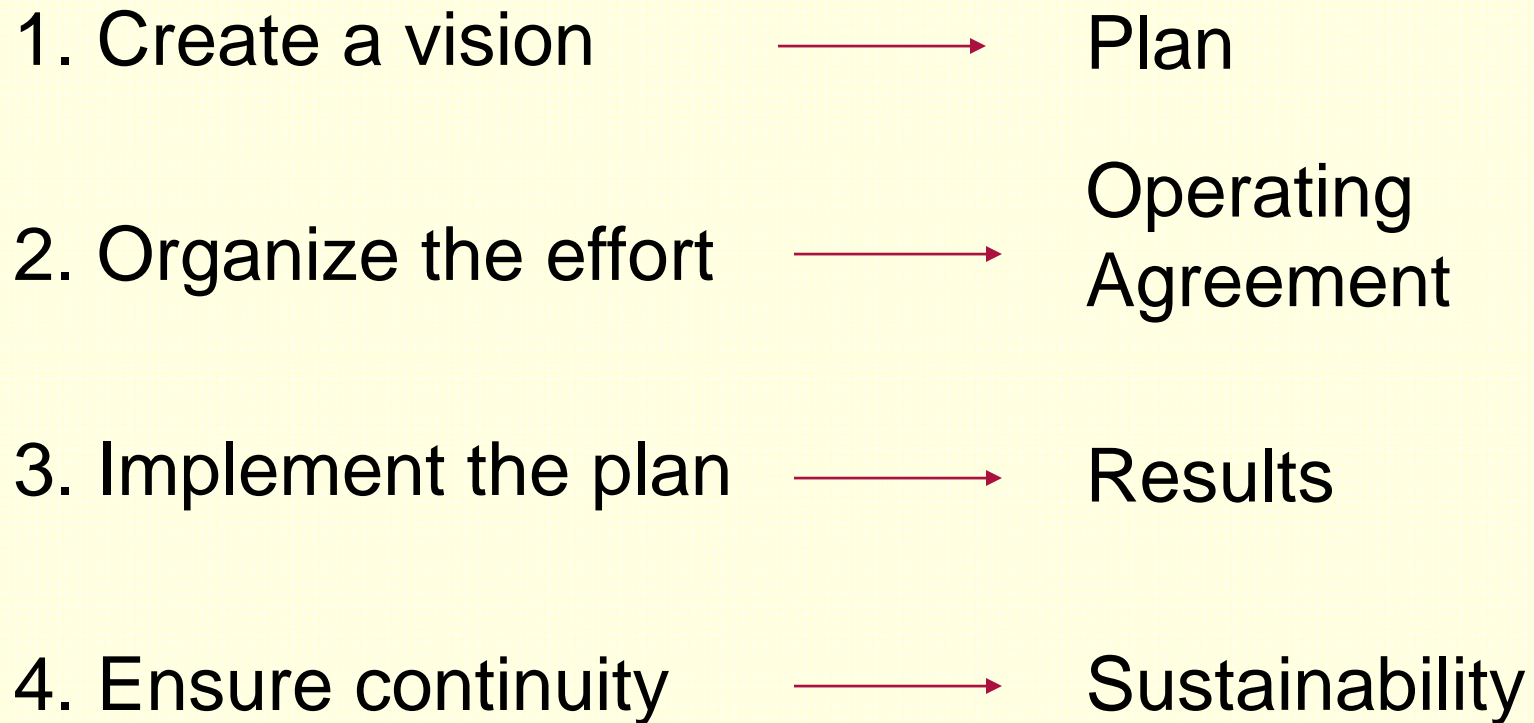


# Collaboration: a good choice when...

- ⦿ Overall system requires significant change
- ⦿ To succeed, all or most players need to participate
- ⦿ For impact, need a larger scale, more resources than one agency can offer
- ⦿ Complex challenge requires complex, multi-party commitment

# STAGES

## of Collaborative Relationships



## STAGE 1:

# Create a Vision

- ⦿ Decide to engage in discussion
- ⦿ Convene people
- ⦿ Build/enhance trust
- ⦿ Develop plan: shared vision, desired results, approach

# Picking Partners

- Familiarity
- Shared goals
- Capabilities and resources
- Learning
- “We really should do this together”

## STAGE 2:

# Organize the Effort

- ◆ Develop a charter: structure, roles, resources
- ◆ Obtain needed support
- ◆ Resolve conflicts
- ◆ Support the members



**“It may be a model, Captain, but it’s highly illogical.”**

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# Deciding to Collaborate

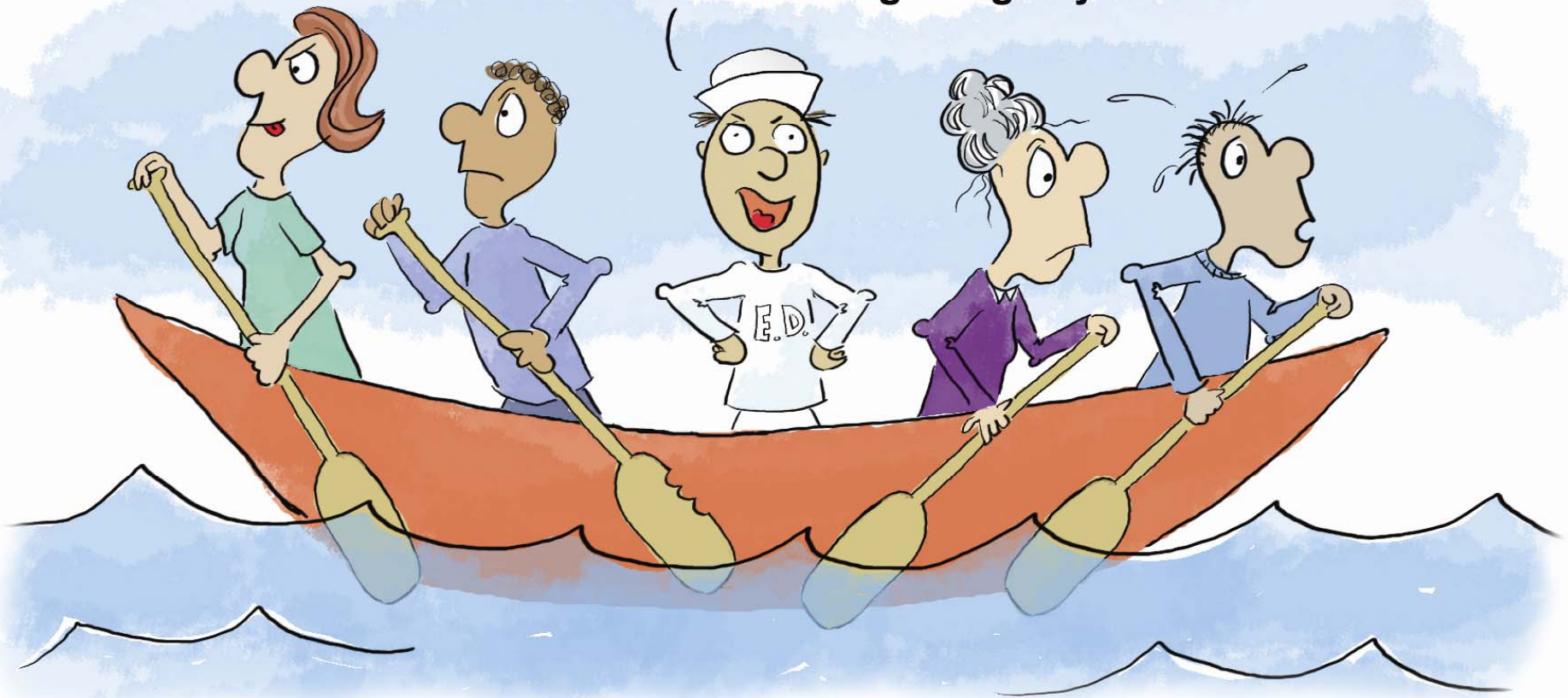
- ⦿ What are your biggest challenges or opportunities?
- ⦿ Which do you have time and motivation to pursue?
- ⦿ Which might be better addressed with a partner(s)?
- ⦿ Who might that partner(s) be?

# Shared purpose

- ⦿ Shared goals benefit ALL members
- ⦿ Goals may evolve; be ready to update
- ⦿ Translate intended outcomes to concrete, measurable goals

# A shared purpose?

**C'mon, put some elbow into it...  
we're not getting anywhere!**



# Shared indicators of progress

- Be clear: what does progress toward goals look like?
- When bogged down: what is making it hard to move forward?
- When goals get old: what do we need to do to refresh and re-commit to goals?

# More reasons for clarity of purpose...

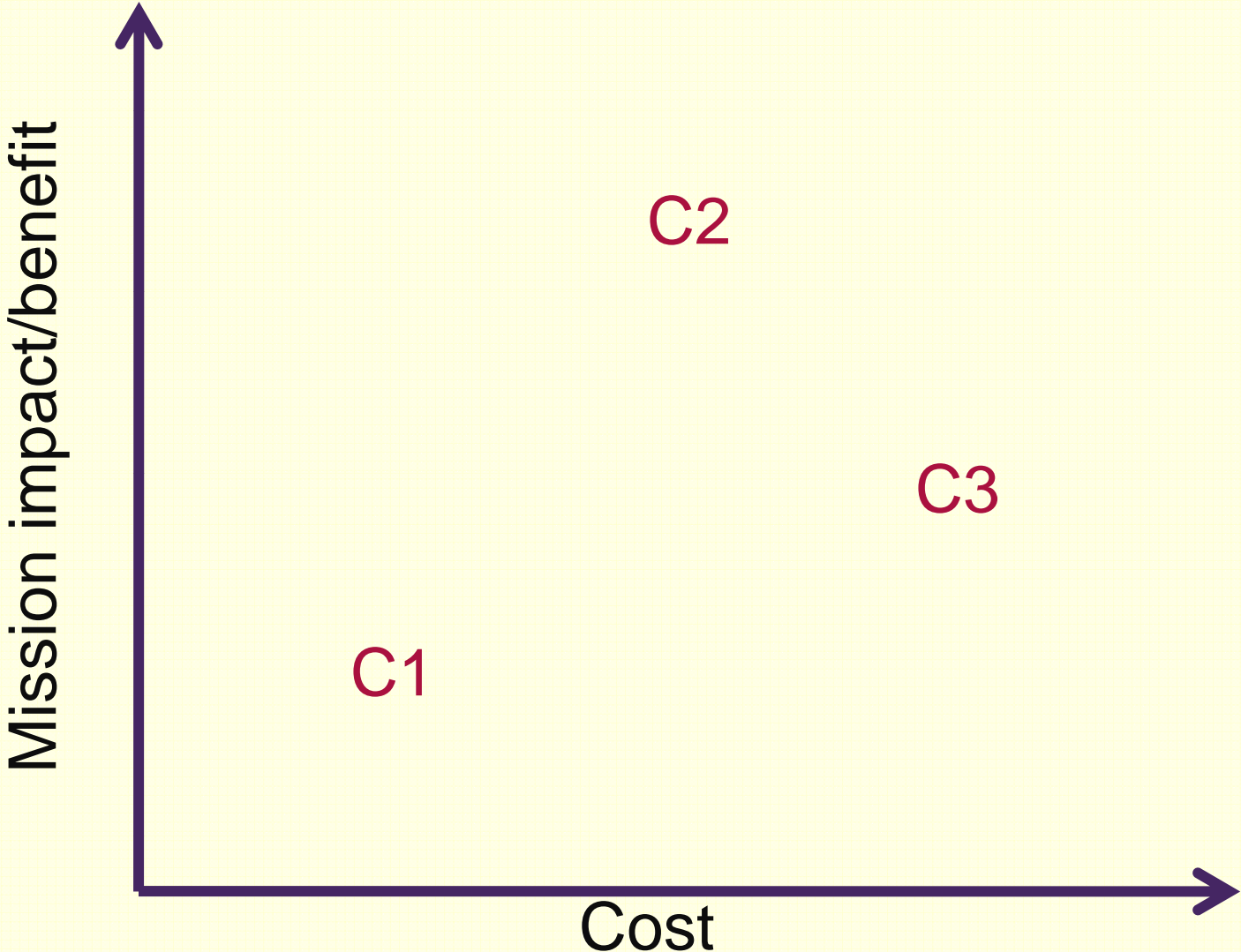
*“If you do collaborate, you’re going to need help from funders and the community.”*

- Grab attention with a compelling, distinctive message.
- All should be committed to it, and be able to deliver the elevator speech.

# Deciding to Collaborate

- ⦿ What are your biggest challenges or opportunities?
- ⦿ Which do you have time and motivation to pursue?
- ⦿ Which might be better addressed with a partner(s)?
- ⦿ Who might that partner(s) be?

# Cost / benefit analysis



# *Discussion:*

*Is collaboration part of the solution for your organization?*

*Why or why not?*

# 3. Addressing problem areas

Addressing problem areas for a more nimble collaboration

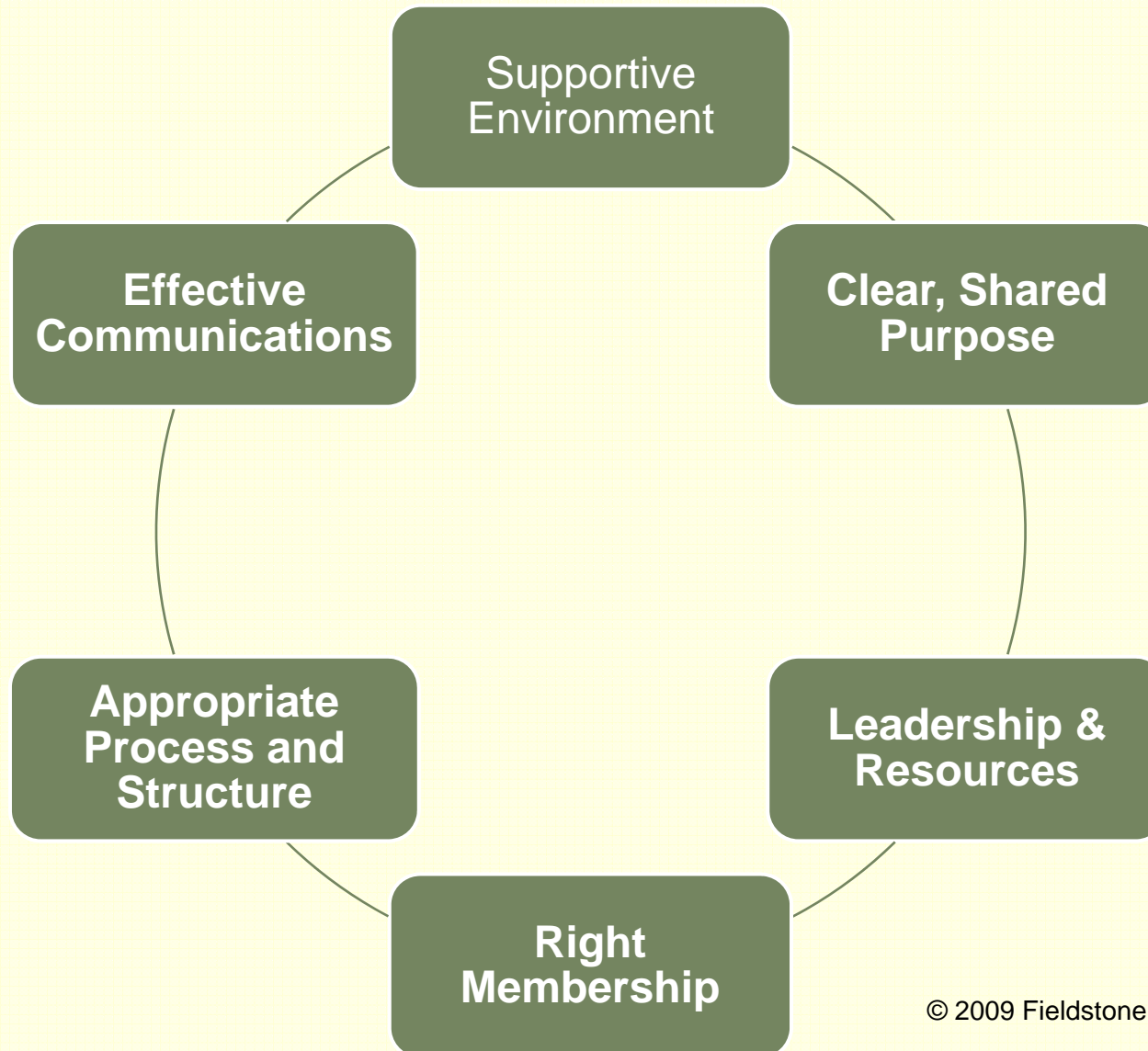
- Trust, leadership, and decision-making

Start with...

## ***The Collaboration Factors Inventory***

A multi-use assessment tool that can be used to assess any problem areas

# Success Factors



# Assessment Tool Uses

- Prior to forming a collaboration:  
*assess your organization's readiness*
- While planning for a collaboration:  
*consider potential partners*
- During the collaboration:  
*decide how you are doing as a group*
- In difficult times:  
*begin discussion on tough issues*



**“So glad you could join us!  
Based on your experience, we’ve  
booked you to lead the following  
8,739 collaboratives...”**

# Building Trust

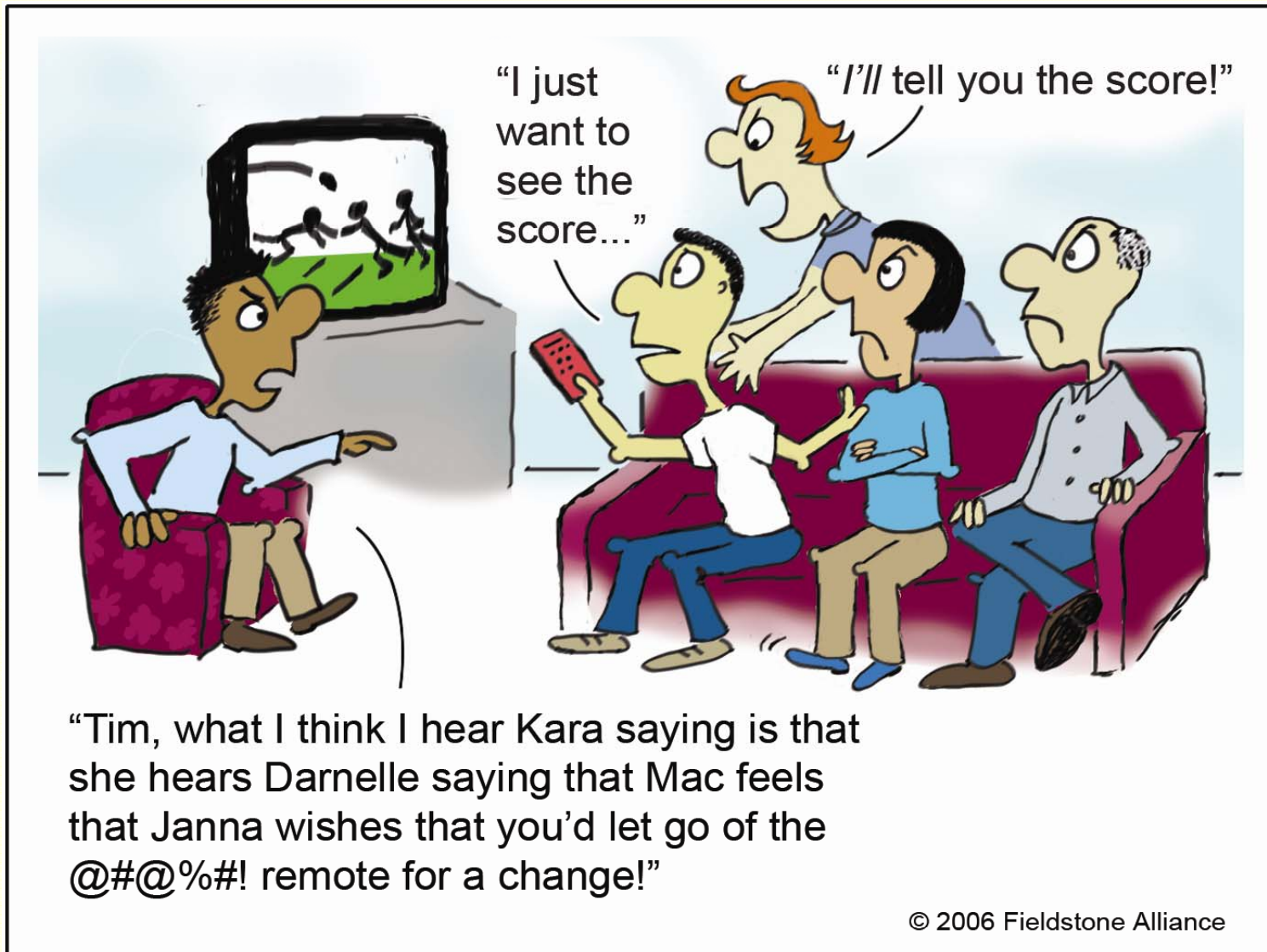
- Understanding self-interest
- Using the Collaboration Factors Inventory
- Understanding the workload
- Addressing conflict when it arises

# Self-Interest

- ◎ Each organization must know what return-on-investment it expects and requires from the collaboration.
- ◎ Collaborative members must understand each other's self-interest

# Tend to trust levels

- ◎ Collaboration starts with a trusted few
- ◎ When the work starts, more are involved
- ◎ Collaboration needs to tend to and grow its pools of mutual trust and respect
  - Be sure partners deliver on promises
  - Build good personal relationships among all



“Tim, what I think I hear Kara saying is that she hears Darnelle saying that Mac feels that Janna wishes that you’d let go of the @#@%#! remote for a change!”

# Managing Conflict

- Conflict is expected – so plan for it
- Managing conflict is a key governance function
- Spell out strategies for resolving conflict in the collaboration charter

# Successful leaders...

- ⦿ Provide the vision
- ⦿ Are highly visible
- ⦿ Share power appropriately
- ⦿ Change the perception of the cost
- ⦿ Identify the first steps
- ⦿ Communicate clearly, consistently to the right audience

# Two Critical Documents

There are two critical documents needed to make the collaborative effective -

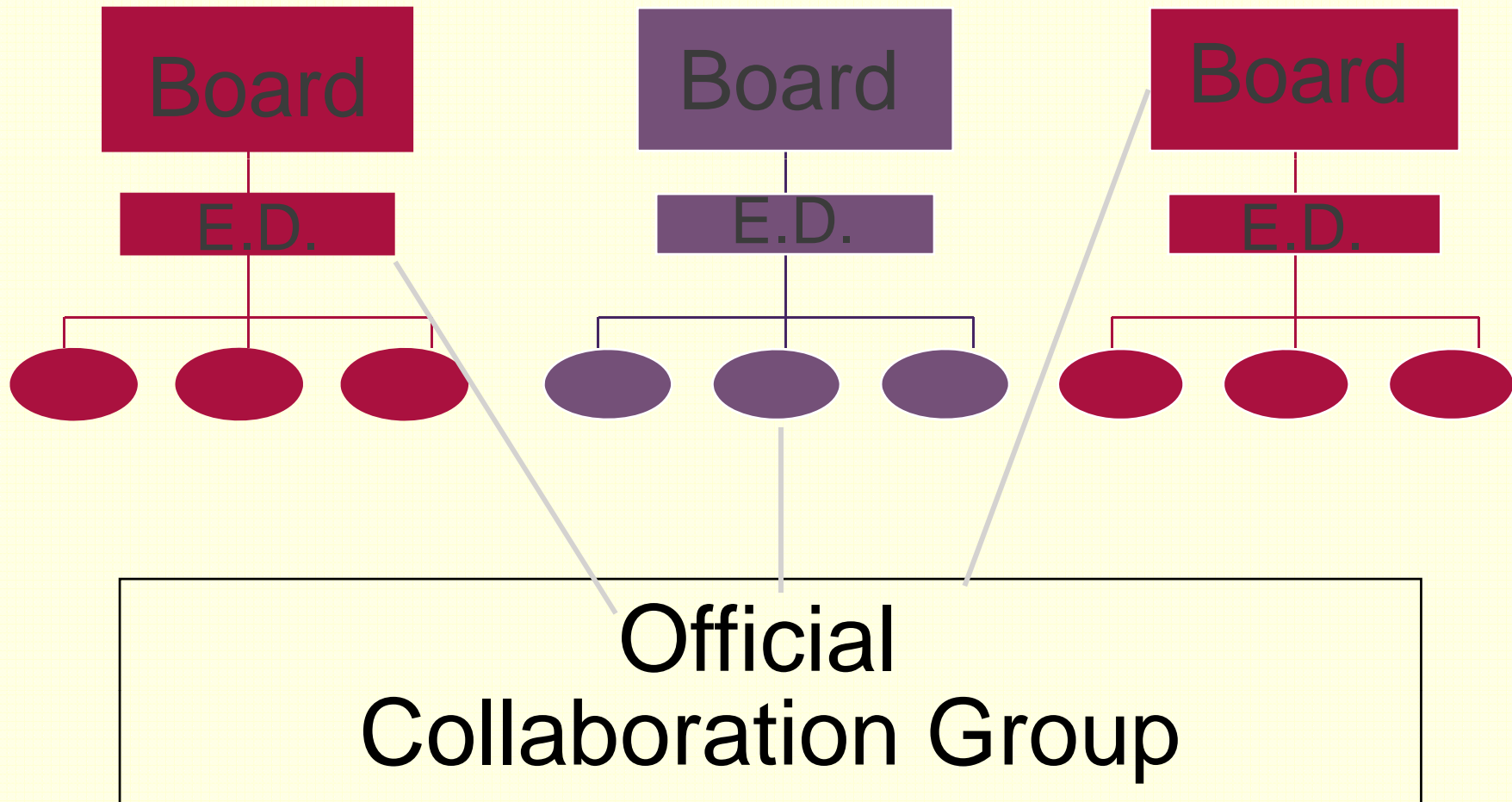
- ⦿ Collaboration plan: the vision, partners, and strategies
- ⦿ Collaboration charter: the operating agreement, or how it will all get done

# Collaboration Charter

- ⦿ Outlines conditions of the collaboration
- ⦿ Covers topics from planning to operations
- ⦿ Often developed over time during the planning stage
- ⦿ Important as a record and a history

# Power Chart

(Who has authority to make decisions)



The power of position is of little help in this world of peers, nor are the traditional hierarchical and political models of leadership.

- *Chrislip and Larson*  
*Collaborative Leadership*

# Making decisions

- Consensus is not the only way to make decisions in a collaborative
- Distinguish between the different types of decisions that need to be made
- Make a clear list of who makes what decisions, and document it in the collaboration charter

# Types of decision-making

- ⦿ Consensus
- ⦿ Democratic
- ⦿ Autocratic
- ⦿ Public voting
- ⦿ Private voting
- ⦿ Majority
- ⦿ Etc., etc!

# Decision making...

- Becomes faster and more effective as power is delegated
- Is improved when decisions are made as close to the consumer as possible
- Links with mutual trust through shared systems – work plans, procedures – that allow for shared control

# *Discussion:*

*What are the steps you'll take to build or strengthen your collaborative, to help you survive and thrive?*

# *There are three kinds of groups:*

*those which **make things happen;***

*those which **wait for things to happen;***

*and*

*those which **wonder what happened.***

# Action Steps

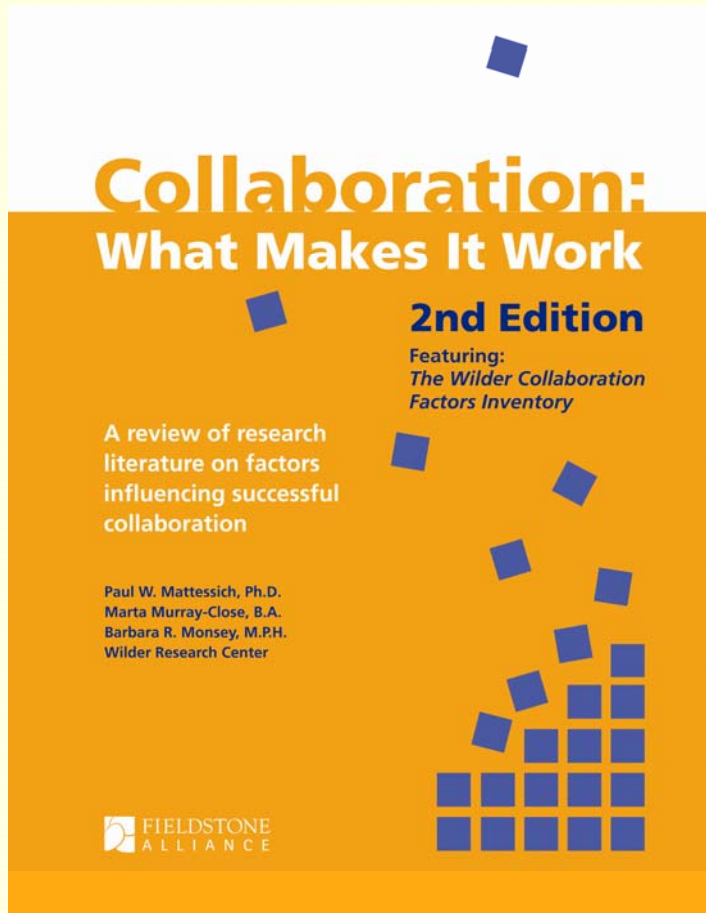
*What are your next  
collaboration action steps?*

*Thank you!*

Sandy Jacobsen  
Fieldstone Alliance

# Keys to Success

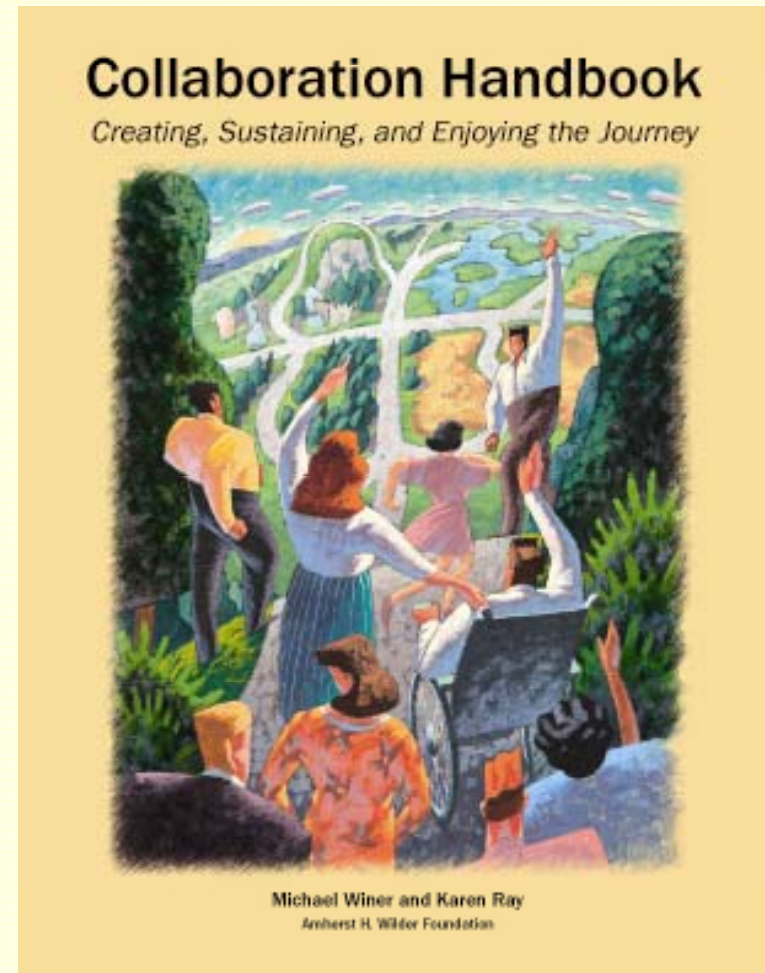
Mattessich, Paul and Monsey, Barbara. *Collaboration: What Makes It Work* (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1992), 7.



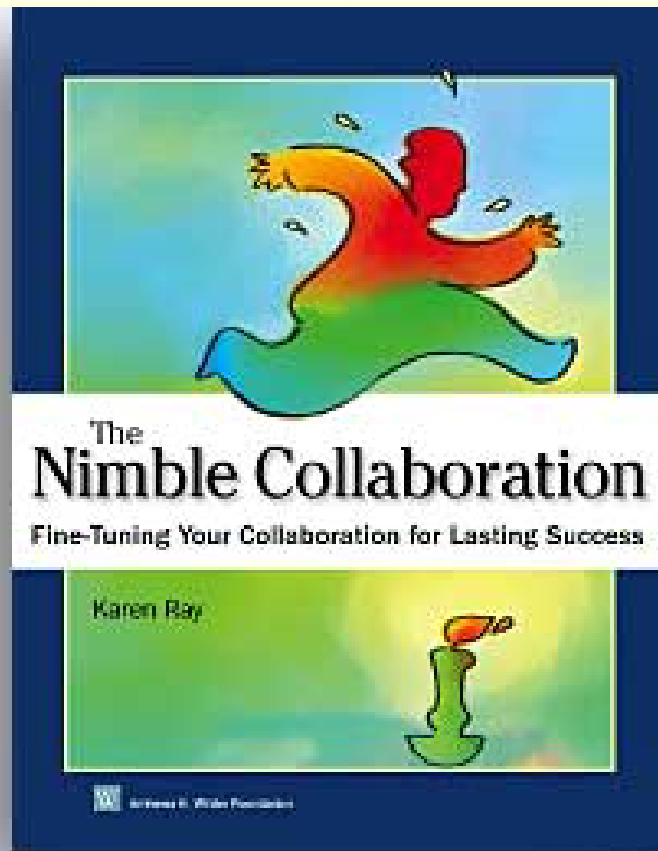
Identifies 6 key areas (20 factors) that influence the success of collaborations.

# Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey

*Collaboration Handbook* by Michael Winer and Karen Ray. Publications can be ordered at [www.FieldstoneAlliance.org](http://www.FieldstoneAlliance.org)



# Nimble collaboration



**Nimble Collaboration:**  
Fine-Tuning Your Collaboration  
for Lasting Success

By Karen Ray  
© 2003 Fieldstone Alliance, Inc.

# Book Discount!

- Receive a **30%** discount when purchasing the ***Collaboration Handbook*** or ***Nimble Collaboration***
- Discount code: **0409SNPO**  
(zero-four-zero-nine-S-N-P-O)
- Offer good through **May 12, 2009**

## Nonprofit Tools You Can Use

Sign-up for this free e-newsletter

Get practical management tips twice per month with our free e-newsletter.

**-Four Keys to Collaboration Success**

**-Tips for Managing Conflict in Collaborations**

**-How to "Nimble-ize" a Collaboration**

<http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/client/signupNEW.cfm>