

# Engaging Hostile District Administrators

Safe Schools/Healthy Students  
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# Think Strategically

- Whose buy-in is most critical to you:
  - Now?
  - Two years from now?
- Who will most easily:
  - Come on board?
  - Follow the leader?
- Who feels like a road block?



# Remember: It's All About Them!

- What are their challenges, needs, values, and beliefs?
- Where/how does our initiative align with our audience?
- Frame and deliver messages, materials that meet their needs



# Understand the School District

## The realities and functions

- Where's the power?
- How are decisions made?
- Who can help you increase your understanding?
- What does the community expect from the district?

# The Exchange Theory

*What are you going  
to give me?*

*Does this solve a  
problem for me?*

*What will I  
have to give  
up in order  
to get it?*



*Is it worth the  
effort to me?*



## The “Typical Approach”

- “Experts” tell everyone what to do because “they know best.”
- Then they become upset when their audience:
  - Won’t participate in programs
  - Won’t read materials
  - Won’t follow the advice
- Asking, “What’s wrong with *THEM?!?*”



# The Marketing Mindset

- Are we offering what our audience needs and wants?
- Are we aligned with our audience's beliefs and values?
- Does our message convey that we're solving a problem for our audience?
- What do we need to offer to offset their perceived costs and barriers?



It's not what you want them to hear—  
it's what they're able to hear



# Messages that Connect

- Illustrates the need for programs/services.
- Illustrates positive trends and successes.
- Are supported by information our audience trusts and values
  - Quantitative data
  - Qualitative data/anecdotal evidence
  - Combination.
- Solves a problem, fills a need, aligns with a value, or confirms a belief.



# The Right Materials and Frequency

- How does our audience like to receive information?
  - In person (team meetings, one-on-one, peer-to-peer, school board presentations)
  - In print (fact sheets, full reports)
  - Electronically
  - Others?
- How often does our audience want/need to hear about us?



# The Right Messengers

- For instance:
  - Principals to superintendents or board
  - Teachers to principals
  - Parents to principals or board
  - Administrative staff to principals
  - Many other variations!



**Who does your intended audience trust and respect the most?**



## Some other strategies to consider

- Be persistent, but not controlling
- Give administrators the spotlight as you showcase success
- Work to be “ITRPATRT”
- Engage “experts from 300 miles away” in your efforts to engage
- Engender support “from below”
- Use the “80/20” rule (aka the Pareto Principle\*) when possible

\*80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes



# Contact Info, Link to Resources

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("Engaging School Administrators Guide" at [www.promoteprevent.org/Publications/ESAguide/index.htm](http://www.promoteprevent.org/Publications/ESAguide/index.htm))