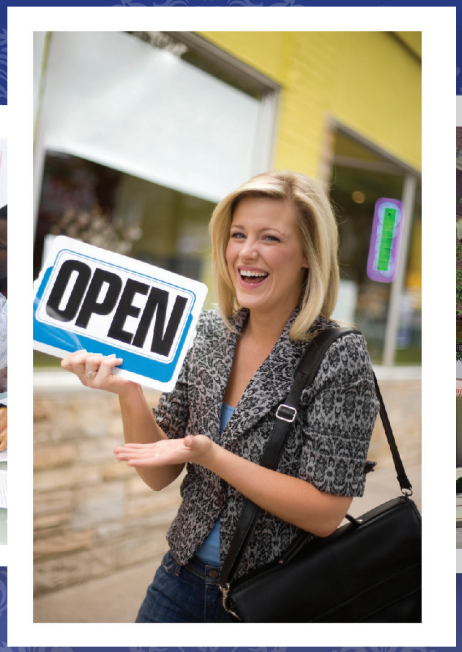


Stronger Economies Together

Strategies for Building New Economic Opportunities

Module Three: Building a Strong Regional Team

Neil Linscheid, University of Minnesota
James Goodwin, Western Rural Development Center

Module Three:
Building a Stronger Regional Team

This instructor's guide outlines the content, handouts, activities and scenarios that should be used to teach this section. Refer to this document for additional comments about each module as well as the overall objectives.

Using the *Participants' Guide*

The *Participants' Guide* contains handouts designed to assist participants in planning their economic development effort.

Using a Scenario

A scenario is utilized in this training for two reasons. First, it challenges participants with actual situations that they may encounter, allowing them to be exposed to these issues in a low stress environment. Second, a scenario easily injects key concepts and leadership dilemmas into training.

The trick to an effective scenario session is being a good storyteller. Your job as the instructor is to immerse the participants into each situation. The presented situations are purposefully ambiguous. You can, however, add additional details if you feel it can add an interesting twist to the story.

As the trainer, keep the following in mind:

- Do not respond to pleas by the group to clarify the scenario.
- Do let the participants struggle with the scenario. (That's the point.)
- Do encourage the participants to fill in the details from their life experience.

Group Exercises

Slide 1:	Group introductions; use ice-breaker if desired
Slide 2:	Reflecting on the previous session
Slides 3-6:	Scenario challenge
Slides 11-12:	Green light/Red light
Slide 14:	Who is at your table?
Slide 15:	Who else should you invite?
Slide 17:	Call to action
Slide 34:	Collaboration expansion
Slide 42:	Final reflections

References

Dabson, B. (2006). Eight principles for effective rural governance and how communities put them into practice. Columbia, MO: Rural Policy Research Institute. Retrieved from www.rupri.org/Forms/RGIreport.pdf

Economic Development Administration. (2010). Module 2: Leading the planning effort. *Know Your Region*, Retrieved from http://www.knowyourregion.org/workshop-modules/leading-the-planning-effort

International Association for Public Participation. (2007). IAP2 Spectrum of public participation. Retrieved from http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/spectrum.pdf

Leiken, S. & Kempner, R. (2010). The challenge of regionalism and the elements of regional collaboration. In Council on Competitiveness, *Collaborate. Leading Regional Innovation Clusters*. (pp. 56-60). Washington, D.C.: Council on Competitiveness, Retrieved from http://www.compete.org/images/uploads/File/PDF%20Files/Final_Collaborate.pdf

Leiken, S. & Kempner, R. (2010). The seven habits of highly effective regional leadership. In Council on Competitiveness, *Collaborate: Leading Regional Innovation Clusters,* (pp. 56-60). Washington D.C.: Council on Competitiveness, Retrieved from http://www.compete.org/images/uploads/File/PDF%20Files/Final_Collaborate.pdf

Radke, B. (2010). How do we engage the public successfully? *Engaging with the Public*, The University of Minnesota. Retrieved from http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/components/00018b.html

Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*(6). pp. 384-399. Retrieved from http://www.mph.ufl.edu/events/seminar/Tuckman1965DevelopmentalSequence.pdf

Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative. (2006). U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from http://www.doleta.gov/wired/about/eta_default.cfm

Instructions:

Module Three encourages participants to build a strong regional team. Each team needs to consider if they have included the right mix of people with the right set of skills and perspectives. If the team needs to expand, this is the right time to do so before they get involved in formulating an economic development plan for the region.

Slide: 1

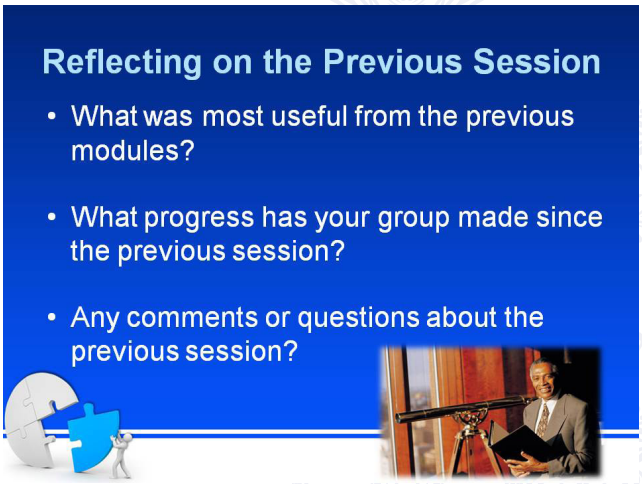
Time: 15+ Minutes. Please have this slide showing as participants arrive.

Script:

"Our discussion today will center on the formation or enhancement of the regional team that will play a central role in the development and implementation of a strong economic development plan for your region. Even if you are part of a team that has worked together for some time, this module will provide ideas and strategies that can help make your efforts even more successful in the region."

Instructions:

Have participants discuss the three questions displayed on the slide, either in small groups or as an entire group. Make sure the participants recall the key points from the last session, and provide an opportunity to clarify anything that didn't make sense. Facilitate this discussion in whatever way is most appropriate for the group.



Script:

Slide: 2

Time: 10 Minutes

"Before we get started talking about this module, let's take a few minutes to reflect on the previous session."

[Ask individuals to share what they found most useful, relevant activities undertaken since the last meeting and anything they feel needs to be clarified. Go around the room asking participants to respond to these questions.]

Instructions:

This is your opportunity to become a storyteller. The script below provides the storyline, but feel free to add details to make things more interesting. Draw participants into the situation so they can see that it really could happen.

Script:

Slide: 3

Time: 6 Minutes

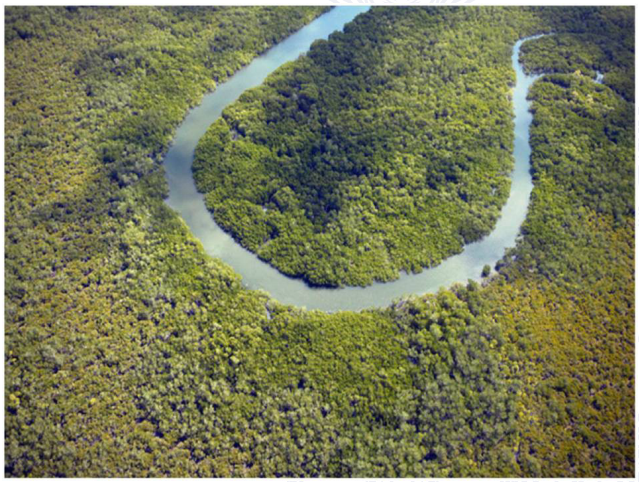
"To start our thinking about building a strong, productive and diverse SET regional economic development team, let's consider one fictional regional development group's story.

The Horseshoe River Collaborative was formed one year ago to promote regional economic development in the communities along the Horseshoe River. The group included a small number of regional leaders that had experience working together. Since the group had worked together, they were able to easily get a few projects started, leading to some amazing early wins. In just one year, the group received two federal grants, one to clean up a four-mile stretch of the river and the other to build a business incubation park in Horseshoe City, the largest city along the river. The clean-up grant is particularly important given that the river's past history as a fantastic tourist destination has diminished in recent years because of pollution.

In spite of early wins, the group has lost momentum in recent months. The primary leader recently took a new position and moved from the region, leaving the others in the group to fill the void. A great deal of work is still to be done, but many of the original collaborative members have accomplished their initial goals resulting in a decline in attendance. A few members continue to meet, but their frustration level is on the rise. At their most recent meeting, one group member asked, 'Are we just meeting to meet?'

In addition to the loss in momentum, the collaborative has been the subject of recent controversy. Several groups have questioned the priorities of the Horseshoe River Collaborative. One organization representing the northern portion of the river has publicly criticized the Collaborative's past efforts, stating that the group needs to distribute efforts more evenly across the region rather than focusing just on the largest city. The critics want a business park developed in the northern part of the region to provide balance.

Script (Cont.):



Another group has questioned the limited scope of the Collaboration. That group, called 'Friends of the River,' represents hotel and recreation businesses in the southern portion of the river that are upset for not being invited to play a role in the collaborative.

Yet another group believes more should be done to support entrepreneurship in the region, but accuses the Horseshoe Collaborative of only focusing support on the powerful existing businesses.

All the groups are confused about what participating in this effort involves. With these complaints surfacing, the collaborative realizes that it needs to make adjustments to make meaningful changes in the region."

Slide: 3 continued

Time: 6 Minutes

Instructions:

Use this slide to highlight the most important aspects of the story you just told. This should only be used as a quick summary, so don't spend too much time here.

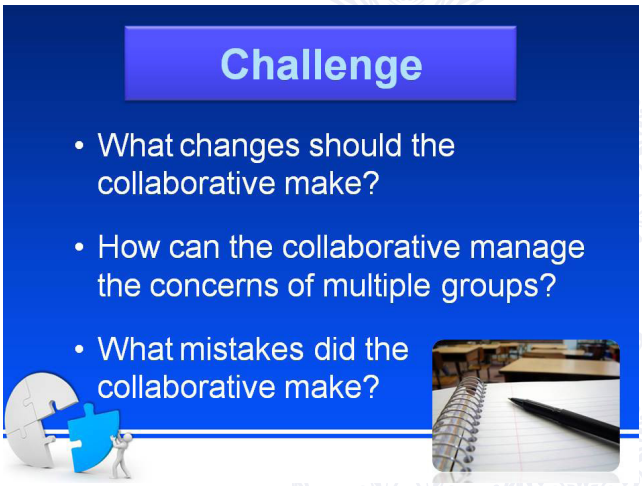
Script:

"Here is a quick summary of the most important points from the story I just shared with you. These will be important in just a minute when I ask you to complete a short activity." [Briefly highlight what is on the slide.]

Slide: 4

Time: 2 Minutes

Instructions:



This exercise will help participants think practically, purposely and strategically about how to ensure their group is successful. It requires the group to plan for the good times and for those times when things are not going so great.

Using the text from this slide, explain to the participants their challenge. Offer a very limited amount of assistance or additional details. If pressed for additional information, encourage the participants to use their own experiences to fill in the missing details. The participants will use Worksheet One to complete the activity. Give participants a few minutes to think and write their answers, and then encourage people to discuss the challenge with each other.

Urge the participants to be specific. They should try to put themselves in the shoes of someone on the leadership team for this collaborative. Most likely, they will have experienced a similar situation. Their experiences will be valuable. Ask for participants to share the highlights of their discussion. Keep track of the comments by writing them on a flip chart.

Slide: 5

Time: 15 Minutes

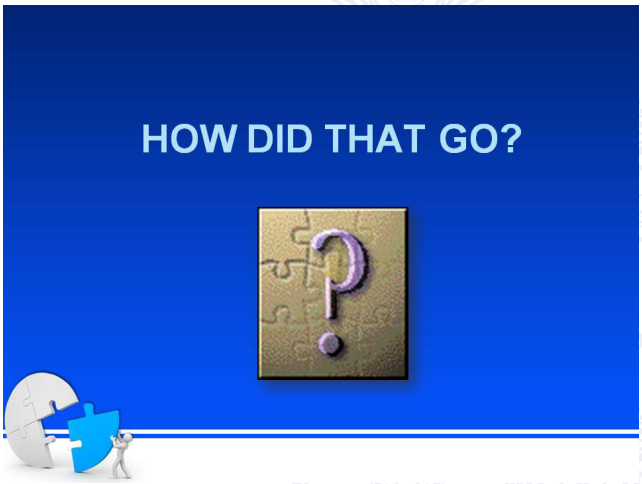
Worksheet One:
The Horseshoe Collaborative

Script:

"I just outlined a scenario that often happens in economic development. I'm sure you have seen something like this in your own work. If not, you likely will someday. Let's take a few minutes to delve deeper into this scenario. Please use Worksheet One to think about how you would accomplish each of the tasks listed. When you have written a few answers for each task, turn to a neighbor and discuss what you each wrote. You'll have about 15 minutes to complete this activity."

Instructions:

Take a few minutes to review the challenge presented in Worksheet One. Encourage them to share what was frustrating about this activity. Be watchful of time, and limit storytelling so the activity does not become bogged down. Participants may have a tendency to spend too much time sharing their stories. Be sure to invite only a few people to discuss their reactions to the story before moving on.



Slide: 6

Time: 7 Minutes

Script:

"I hope you found the scenario to be challenging. I think it reflects the way things often happen when we start big projects in a region or communities. Let's hear your thoughts on these challenges:

Who's willing to share their thoughts and ideas about the first challenge? [Take one story.]

How about the second question? What did you decide? [Take one story.]

The third issue we asked you to address? [Take one story.]

Thanks for sharing all those great solutions to this challenge. Keep these in mind as we continue our discussions today. Organizing an effective leadership team is no easy task. However, we will talk together about some strategies for accomplishing this important effort."

Instructions:

Read through the outline of Module Three.

Script:

"Keeping the people element of regional economic development sustainable will be the focus of the rest of this module. Much of this work involves you, the leaders of this SET regional team, being prepared for the ups and downs that occur when organizing people and groups with diverse interests.

[Review the bullet points on the slide.]

The bottom line is to find solutions and options that might work in your region, test them out and implement what works best. Please feel free to add your thoughts to the conversation at any time."

Slide: 7

Time: 1 Minute

Instructions:

Building a strong, diverse team early is key to the success of the region's plan.

Script:

"Just as a football coach seeks to bring together a diverse set of athletes to build a strong team, your team will be stronger by thinking through who to include."

Slide: 8

Time: 1 Minute

Instructions:

Some groups may be coming to the table having invited the obvious partners. Begin exploring with them what it might look like to be "radically inclusive."

Script:

"What do you think is meant by this idea of being 'radically inclusive?' What opportunities do you think might develop with a broad array of team members working together? Let's explore in more depth the elements of a strong team." [Go to the next slide.]

Slide: 9

Time: 1 Minute

Instructions:

Discuss these key attributes of a strong regional team with the participants.

Script:

"Your job as a regional team is quite important. This slide outlines some of the attributes of a strong regional team. [Read each of the bullets.]

Your group will likely start out with an initial surge in energy, but it's up to you to work to sustain that energy. Let's start by thinking about some obstacles that may lie ahead."

Slide: 10

Time: 1 Minute

Instructions:

Exploring the reasons people are inspired to join an organization and contribute their skills, energy and time is an important consideration. Most people have been part of a group only to have later lost some interest or even quit the organization. Some common themes usually emerge when exploring reasons people join groups and reasons they leave. This slide and the next, along with Worksheet Two, will help the participants think about the good and the bad aspects of being part of a group and about incorporating the good features while avoiding pitfalls that can discourage sustained involvement in the group's efforts.

Slide: 11

Time: 7 Minutes

Worksheet Two:
Green Light/Red Light

Script:

"No doubt all of you have been a member of several organizations/groups over the years. We can learn a lot about how to organize this regional team from these past experiences.

On the first part of Worksheet Two, please list two organizations to which you currently belong and note why you give that group your time, expertise and energy. You can include any type of group: professional, nonprofit, social, religious, formal, informal, etc. Be as specific as possible with your reasoning.

Now list two organizations to which you once belonged, but are no longer an active member. Quickly list reasons you left these groups/organizations."

[Move to the next slide before getting feedback.]

Instructions:

After completing Worksheet Two, ask participants to quickly share some of the reasons they joined groups and reasons they left. (Avoid storytelling at this point. The purpose is to get to the reason in search of themes.) Record responses on two separate flip charts. Once you have these responses, ask the group to consider common themes that can be applied to their work as a regional team to promote involvement. For instance, some frequent responses to this exercise include such themes as time commitments, relevance to own interests, group dynamics, etc. Ask the group how these themes can guide their efforts to keep their team active and vibrant.

Slide: 12

Time: 8 Minutes

Worksheet Two:
Green Light/Red Light

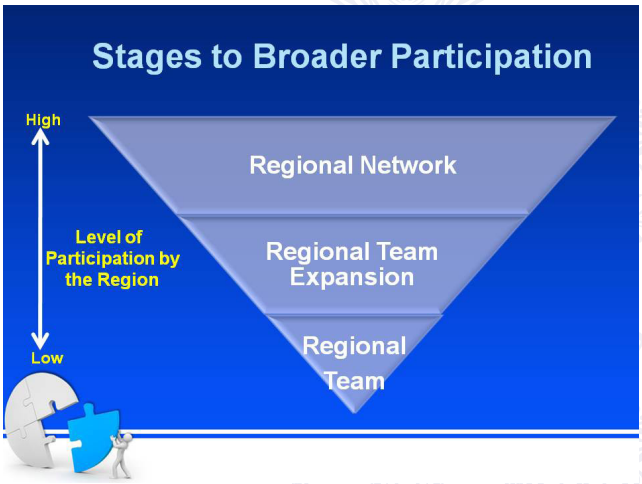
Script:

"One important aspects of an organization's ongoing planning is focusing on what attracts talented, energetic people to an initiative, project or activity. Equally important is understanding what negative factors can interrupt the effectiveness of a group over time, especially what prompts a formerly excited and energetic person to quit the group. Let's hear from three or four of you as to why you joined a particular group. Then, let's hear from a different three or four of you as to why you quit participating in a group. [Record answers on Joined and Left flip charts.]

Are there common themes for joining or leaving groups? How can you incorporate these insights into your group's regional planning efforts?" [Allow for discussion.]

Instructions:

The next series of slides examines more closely the mix of people that composes the regional team. Walk the participants through three stages: (1) Examine the make-up of their current regional team; (2) Determine if additional people need to be invited to join the team; (3) Design a call to action.



Script:

Slide: 13

Time: 1 Minute

"Now, let's consider the composition of your regional team to determine room for expansion. As you can see from the diagram, by moving up from the bottom tier to the upper tier of the triangle, the level of participation by people and groups in your region expands, which fosters success over the long run. Let's begin by looking at those involved in your regional team right now."

Instructions:

Ask the group to take a hard look at the current composition of their regional team. Regional teams often are dominated by individuals from local government and business sectors. If that is the case, challenge the team to look for members beyond these two sectors. Broader representation is crucial to getting buy-in by people, communities and organizations in the region. Are the people and groups listed on this slide represented on their regional team?

Script:

"Let's take a moment to examine the current composition of your regional team by seeing what major segments your team members represent. While there's no straightforward answer to the question, 'Who should be on our team?,' a couple of key examples can provide guidance.

The EDA (the Economic Development Administration), in a regional initiative similar to SET called WIRED, recommends the groups noted on this slide as important partners in regional economic development. [WIRED stands for 'Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative.']

Valuable guidance is also provided by a report published by RUPRI (the Rural Policy Research Institute) in 2006, which recommends involvement from business associations, universities and community colleges, nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, community foundations and others. The report says decision-making that fails to include the insights and contributions of this broader array of representatives is likely to be unsustainable since it may not reflect the hopes and aspirations of the entire region. What other main categories might you add? [Allow for responses.]

Let's take a look at your current team membership. Think for a moment about the categories/interests you represent. You may have more than one. Let's quickly go around the room to tally who is already at the table. [Using a flip chart, list the categories (such as business, government, education) that members represent. Use tally marks beside each category to gauge the overall team composition.]

Let's now move onto the next slide where we can start to fill in the missing category gaps."

Slide: 14

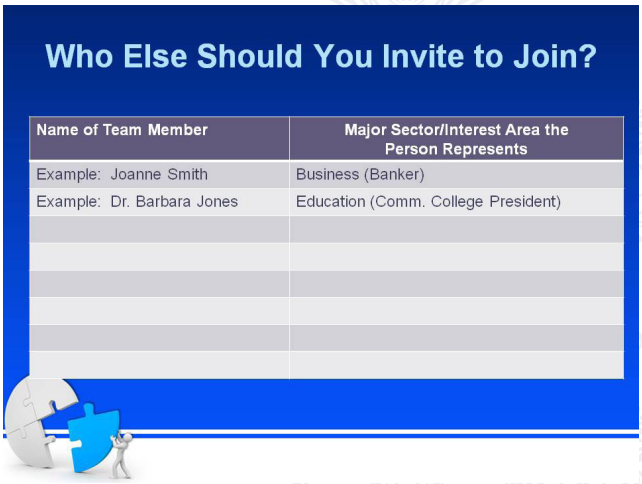
Time: 10 Minutes

Sources:
Dabson, B. (2006). Eight principles for effective rural governance and how communities put them into practice. Columbia, MO: Rural Policy Research Institute. Retrieved from www.rupri.org/Forms/RGIreport.pdf.

Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative. (2006). U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from http://www.doleta.gov/wired/about/eta_default.cfm

Instructions:

Worksheet Three encourages the team to consider inviting others to the table who represent groups that are missing. It's ok if they can't list a person but can suggest a group or category. Encourage them to capture the names of new organizations or groups on Worksheet Three. Identifying appropriate individuals to fill those slots can be explored as homework. Diversity is key!



Who Else Should You Invite to Join?

Name of Team Member	Major Sector/Interest Area the Person Represents
Example: Joanne Smith	Business (Banker)
Example: Dr. Barbara Jones	Education (Comm. College President)

Slide: 15

Time: 10 Minutes

Worksheet Three:
Who Else Should You Invite?

Script:

"Now, let's think about people representing diverse organizations or groups across your region who may need to be invited to this effort.

Diversity is a key word here. No doubt any number of organizations and groups could contribute to this initiative, yet these groups are not typically asked to participate in economic planning. They should be. The success of your group will be much greater with a broad, diverse group of people from your region. Remember: Be Radically Inclusive.

[In small groups or on their own] Using Worksheet Three, take five minutes to jot down the names of people and/or organizations or groups that should be at your planning table. When you are done, we'll take a quick look at some of the new people and groups you think ought to be considered for your team." [Allow time for brainstorming, then have participants report back to the group.]

Instructions:

While the previous slide discussed categories and interests to include, this slide highlights some other important characteristics of team members. While no single person will be able to fulfill all these requirements, together the team should possess these important strengths.

Script:

Slide: 16

Time: 5 Minutes

"Now that we've reviewed the composition of the regional team and determined where expansion is needed, let's take a look at some of the important characteristics team members should have to get things done in the region. The slide outlines some of these attributes. Of course, no one person can fulfill all of these requirements, but collectively the team needs this important set of skills.

Your team needs members who. . .

- Can influence the success of the strategy
- Have special skills that implementation may require
- Have the needed resources to actively participate in moving the group goals forward
- Are respected leaders in the sectors or interest areas they represent (non-governmental groups, nonprofits, voluntary groups, faith-based institutions, etc.)
- Will help spread the message and encourage buy-in throughout the region
- Represent emerging industry sectors
- Represent the diverse populations of your region

Does this give you any other ideas of people or groups to include in your invitation list?" [Add names as identified.]

Instructions:

Now that the team has identified who needs to be invited, the next task is outlining the principles of a call to action that can improve the chances of success. After briefly highlighting these bullets, move quickly to Worksheet Four. Let the participants work in small groups to design an effective and productive call to action.

Script:

Slide: 17

Time: 20 Minutes

Worksheet Four: Call to Action

"With your invitation list in hand, developing a call to action is the next step to mobilizing more people to become involved in your regional effort. The slide showcases some of the basic principles that can make a call to action effective. While the principles are straight-forward and logical, accomplishing them is the real challenge. Each person might respond better to a different issue or concern so you may need to modify your call to action to make it compelling for the different people or groups you hope to attract to the team.

Using the questions on Worksheet Four, work with a partner on these principles for your region. Your responses will help you frame your invitation to potential new members by providing a better feel for your regional team's purpose. We'll take about 10 minutes for your work. [Allow time to work than ask for a few responses for each question. Avoid letting the discussion become too long.]

These are great beginning points to the call to action. Would two or three of you volunteer to fine-tune a call to action before our next meeting?"

Instructions:

As groups form and grow, they need to be effective at reaching out to their public to pull in new and talented members. This slide depicts a continuum of public involvement ranging from simply informing the public to actually empowering them to make decisions about the direction of the plan.

Script:

Slide: 18

Time: 10 Minutes

Sources:
International Association for Public Partnership. (2007). IAP2 Spectrum of public participation. Retrieved from http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/spectrum.pdf

Radke, B. (2010). How do we engage the public successfully? *Engaging with the Public,* The University of Minnesota. Retrieved from http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/components/00018b.html

"While it is impractical to involve every person in your region in the planning process, engaging the entire region in some manner is a crucial step in building regional support. The public can offer insights, identify resources, help spread the word and a host of other helpful efforts.

Public participation can take on many different forms, depending on the amount of time available and of the level of involvement the team seeks. Think of the involvement on a spectrum from least on the left of the slide to greatest on the right. As the involvement increases, so does not only the amount of time needed but also the value received. Your team will need to weigh each of these factors to determine how to involve the public in the planning process. Let's explore briefly what is involved at each level of participation. The International Association for Public Participation provides this model:

- **Inform** the public with objective and balanced information. This is a one-way flow of information often involving fact sheets, newspaper articles or meetings designed to simply provide information to attendees.
- **Consult** with the public by informing them and then requesting input. At this stage, offer an opportunity for the public to comment and provide input considered during the final planning process. Tools to facilitate this type of involvement include focus groups and public meetings in which comments are allowed.
- **Involve** the public in the decision by accepting input and then reflecting this input in the choice. At this level, the public begins to actually shape the choices through their input. Conducting workshops or polls or placing affected individuals on decision-making boards are strategies that can aid in this level.

Script (Cont.):

- **Collaborate** by engaging with the public and sharing the decision-making with them. Appointing the public to committees that help shape the decision process leads to collaboration. Also, engaging in participatory decision making strategies such as round table discussions could foster this involvement.
- **Empower** the public by putting the final decision in their hands. At this level, say to the public, 'We will implement what you decide.' Community (study) circles provide one model for allowing the public to be in charge of the planning.

What other ideas do you have to engage your public? What level of involvement do you foresee seeking from the public as your plan begins to form?"

Slide: 18 continued

Time: 10 Minutes

Sources:

International Association for Public Partnership. (2007). IAP2 Spectrum of public participation. Retrieved from http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/spectrum.pdf

Radke, B. (2010). How do we engage the public successfully? *Engaging with the Public,* The University of Minnesota. Retrieved from http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/components/00018b.html

Instructions:

Engaging public participation is critical in any effort. The increased ownership that comes from inviting local communities and residents to partner in the development of a sound plan will help get it off the ground. This slide outlines basic principles of engaging the public that should be embraced regardless of the level of involvement sought.

Script:

Slide: 19

Time: 5 Minutes

"Why should your regional team involve the public? What benefits do you see?

Regardless of exactly which strategy you chose, placing some key elements into the planning of the involvement will help strengthen the likelihood of a positive experience for all.

- **Select a neutral convener** – It's important that your team be viewed as a neutral body that can bring multiple interests together. If that is not possible, work with an organization that can be viewed as a neutral convener (such as a college or Cooperative Extension Service educator) to serve as a co-sponsor of this event.
- **Encourage diversity** – The richest input will come from the most diverse group of participants. Work to ensure all voices are included and heard.
- **Allow participants to 'own' the process** – To the extent possible, allow the participants to help shape the direction and flow of the process.
- **Communicate the benefits to participants** – Your team needs to be prepared to demonstrate the benefits of your SET initiative to the people who you wish to participate. It's not enough to say that the participants will feel good about being part of something big. They need to be able to see the specific benefits they, their community or organization will receive because of their participation.
- **Welcome adversaries** – Ask adversaries to take part. Keeping them out of the summit can cause problems for you down the road. By making them part of the process early, they might, in time, support your efforts.
- **Seek active participation** – Design ample time and space for participants to actively respond.

Script (Cont.):

Let's take a few minutes now to think about when and how you might wish to involve the public.

- First of all, how are you going to determine who the stakeholders are?
- How can you make participants feel they really are a part of the process?
- How would you describe the benefits of participation?
- How can you work productively with adversaries?
- While not everyone can join or will want to join, how are you going to reach out beyond your normal circle?"

Slide: 19 continued

Time: 5 Minutes

Instructions:

Part of creating a strong regional SET team is understanding a bit about how groups often form and develop. Just as building a house involves different layers and levels, so does building an effective group. The next few slides describe common stages in the development of a strong group.

Script:

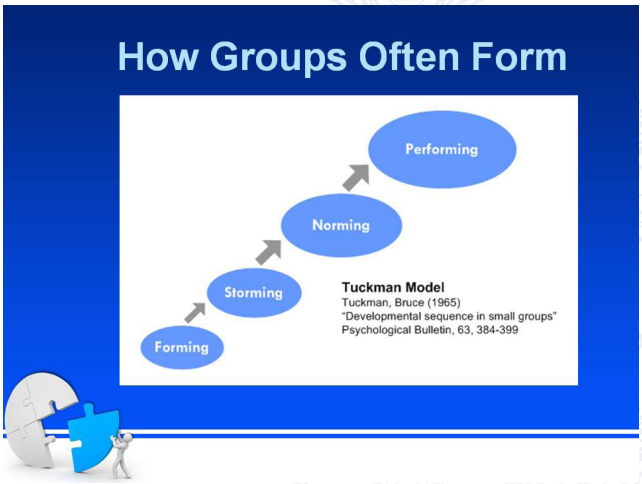
Slide: 20

Time: 1 Minute

"If you've ever been involved in building a house, you understand that some necessary processes take place to get to the final product. Part of creating a strong regional SET team is understanding that groups, like houses, go through various stages to form strong, effective teams. We'll take a look at this in the next few slides."

Instructions:

The next few slides will explore this model, created by Bruce Tuckman, that describes typical developmental stages of groups. Understanding these normal stages will help the team prepare for and navigate the changes ahead.



Script:

"Of course groups never form exactly the same. Nonetheless, most groups evolve along a similar pattern. Dr. Bruce Tuckman identified four common group development stages depicted on this slide. He maintained that these phases are all necessary and inevitable for the team to grow, to face up to challenges, to tackle problems, to find solutions, to plan work and to deliver results. His model provides an excellent description of typical group development. Each of the four steps builds on the previous. We're going to take a closer look at his model in these next few slides. Understanding this evolution can help minimize surprises as to how groups act along the way. Let's take a closer look."

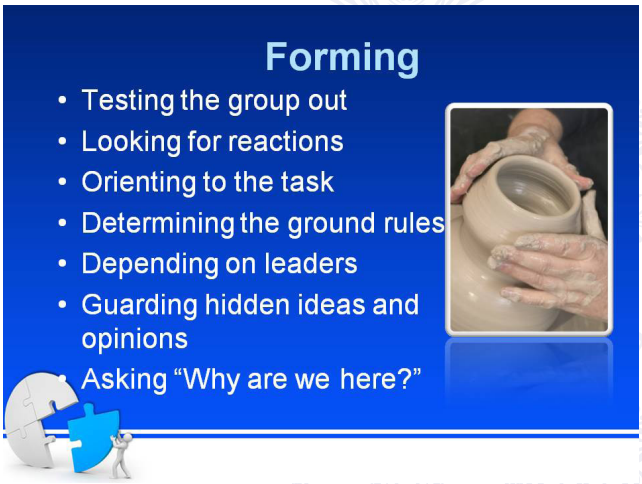
Slide: 21

Time: 2 Minutes

Source:
Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*(6). pp. 384-399. Retrieved from http://www.mph.ufl.edu/events/seminar/Tuckman1965Developmental-Sequence.pdf

Instructions:

Explain the forming stage from the Tuckman Model using the bullet points from the slide.



Script:

"The first stage in Tuckman's Model is 'Forming.' In this stage, individuals spend a majority of their time learning about each other. Individuals are testing the group and looking for reactions. The team's mission, the individual expectations and the tasks are likely to be ambiguous. The focus is on building the relationships of team members and building trust. Strong leadership will likely be required at this stage to help define the initial tasks and expectations. The members will likely look to you and ask, 'why are we here?' For now, you'll need a good answer.

This is an important stage in team development, so don't minimize it. This lays the foundation for your team to work through the other stages of group development. The leadership tasks you need to undertake in this stage differ from future development stages. Be prepared to change your involvement as the team develops."

Slide: 22

Time: 2 Minutes

Instructions:

Explain the storming stage from the Tuckman Model, drawing from the bullets for the basic characteristics of this phase.

Script:

Slide: 23

Time: 5 Minutes

"'Storming' is the second stage in Tuckman's Model. Think of a thunderstorm. During the storming stage, you can expect to see conflict as individuals and organizations start to assert their ideas and compete for influence and control over the group process. While this stage may feel uncomfortable, the conflicts and polarization that occur help uncover the true needs of individuals and their sponsoring organizations.

As a leadership team member, the key is recognizing healthy conflicts and those that are not. For instance, personal attacks should never be allowed, as they are unhealthy to the group's growth. However, conflicts related to where the team is headed, what things are important and how work should be done are all positive. Emotion is normal in this stage, but carefully monitor conflicts and keep them focused on promoting team success. Growth means movement, and with all movement comes friction. Being willing to openly discuss points of disagreement will open up opportunities to identify points of agreement.

How many of you have been part of a group in the 'Storming' stage? How did the group handle this stage? What did you learn from the experience?" [Allow time for brief discussion.]

Instructions:

Use these bullet points to describe the norming stage from the Tuckman Model.

Script:

"Once the storm has passed, groups begin to move toward the third stage, 'Norming.' Resistance expressed during the 'Storming' stage is replaced by trust and cohesion. The group's purpose becomes much more defined and accepted. Differences of opinion still occur, but they are resolved to the benefit of the group in a mature manner. Hidden agendas or cliques disappear as individuals accept responsibilities for mutually recognized roles. Team creativity and group confidence grows. They start developing a 'We can succeed!' feeling.

Reinforcing this new, productive behavior and group environment is vital. Leaders move toward asking and expecting results. Promoting and publicizing wins, both inside and outside the group, becomes a vital task as the maturing group begins the transition to the all important 'Performing' stage."

Slide: 24

Time: 2 Minutes

Instructions:

"Performing" is the last stage in the Tuckman Model. The bullet points from the slide depict the key elements.

Script:

"The 'Performing' stage is characterized by moving confidently ahead as a cohesive group and putting team needs before individual needs to accomplish the group vision and goals. At this stage, roles become flexible as structural issues have been resolved. The group has become a tool to solve problems and accomplish the vision and goals. Trust, openness and mutual support are high. Confrontation, maturely handled, is not seen as an evil that must never occur. A genuine feeling of confidence in accomplishing group vision and goals exists. They are now a fully functioning group.

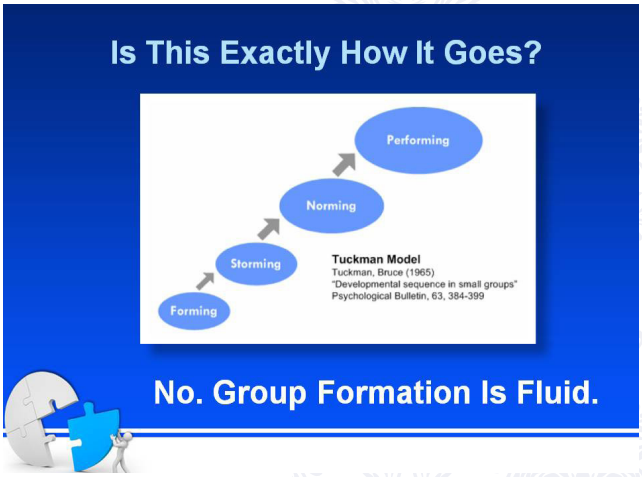
Group leaders channel responsibilities to match strengths of individuals within the group and transition to a cheerleader role, urging the group on and praising group accomplishments. Frequently communicating and connecting with the various subgroups working on the project is essential to maintaining momentum."

Slide: 25

Time: 2 Minutes

Instructions:

While the Tuckman Model is time-tested, groups need to understand that team formation is seldom a "lock-step" process. Instead, groups may move back and forth between stages from time to time and experience some overlap between stages. However, recognizing that most groups go through these stages in some form can help group leaders respond accordingly to help the group grow.



Slide: 26

Time: 5 Minutes

Script:

"Anyone who has facilitated a newly formed group will have some understanding of the phrase 'herding cats.' While the Tuckman Model is a time tested model that describes what most small groups experience to become a fully functioning and productive group, distinct lines do not exist between the stages. Instead, teams may partially move ahead to the next stage in some areas while possibly slipping back to the previous stage on others. Some groups may spend little time in one stage of development before moving up to the next, while others may seem to take an inordinately long time to advance. It is important for the leader and the group to keep the initiative moving ahead even when the going seems a bit slow.

Understanding these stages, learning to read the group and knowing how to react are key leadership skills that will facilitate success toward regional goals. Conflict need not be seen as evil to be avoided at all costs. Properly handled and processed conflict can create positive growth for the group.

What have you seen from past groups that mirror some of these stages? Have you worked with a group that walked through all four stages?" [Take time for a few brief stories.]

Instructions:

As a summary to the discussion on group formation, have the group consider the simple statement that titles this slide. Understanding the nature of individual change also gives perspective to group change. The better the team understands group change, the better they will navigate these inevitable shifts as they occur.

Script:

Slide: 27

Time: 1 Minute

"When do you change channels on the TV? [Allow for a few quick responses.] Probably your responses mirror some or all of these points about when people decide to change their circumstances.

People change when they:

- Become dissatisfied with their current situation
- See an opportunity to improve their situation
- Consider the pain of changing to be less than the pain of current situation

As your team moves through the months ahead together, understanding these few basic concepts of group and individual change will help you navigate these shifts effectively."

Instructions:

Growing, successful groups are also good networkers that understand how to create partnerships and collaborations. These connections are vital to stakeholder buy-in and success.

Script:

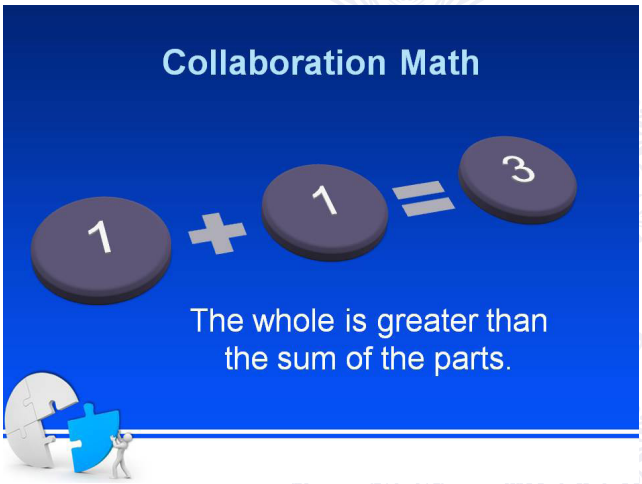
Slide: 28

Time: 1 Minute

"As your regional team takes shape, you will quickly discover the importance of becoming good networkers and partnership builders in order to achieve success. The more stakeholders you bring into your group, the more likely you are to get buy-in across the region. This section explores ways to build these important linkages."

Instructions:

This "collaboration math" is a simple way to illustrate that more can be accomplished together than by working individually.



Script:

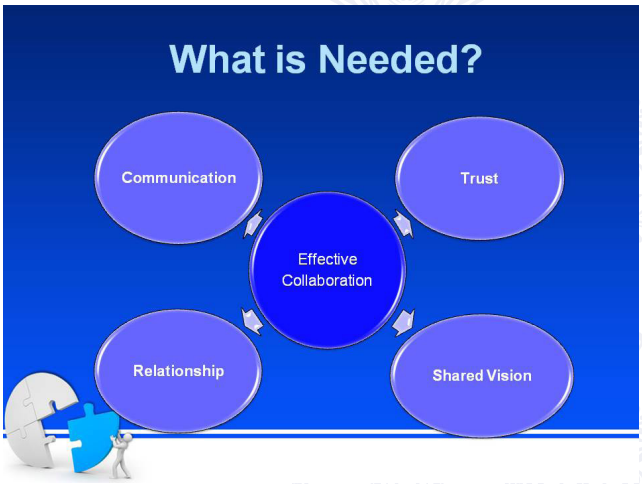
"While this equation will not likely win points on a math quiz, the truth expressed here is vital to big wins in collaborations. What the whole group can accomplish together will be greater that what each person or organization within the group can do individually."

Slide: 29

Time: 1 Minute

Instructions:

The slide lays a foundation for four vital elements to building effective collaboration. After a few moments of discussion of each of these four elements, ask participants if they can think of any more.



Script:

"Let's start thinking about what is needed to create an effective collaboration. We have listed four essential components of a great partnership on this slide. Why do you think these four are important? [Allow for discussion.] What other elements would you add?"

Slide: 30

Time: 2 Minutes

Source:
Leiken, S. & Kempner, R. (2010). The challenge of regionalism and the elements of regional collaboration. In Council on Competitiveness, *Collaborate. Leading Regional Innovation Clusters*. (pp. 56-60). Washington, D.C.: Council on Competitiveness, Retrieved from http://www.compete.org/images/uploads/File/PDF%20Files/Final_Collaborate.pdf

Instructions:

Quickly cover these four benefits. Ask the group if they can think of any more.

Script:

"Let's take a quick look at some of the benefits of collaborating with others:

- **Shared resources** – Sharing resources increases the capacity of effort by reducing redundancy.
- **Expanded perspectives brought to work on issues/opportunities** – The old adage 'two heads are better than one' applies here. As more perspectives help shape the group's planning, the direction becomes clearer.
- **Larger region creates potential for positive results for greater number of people** – This goes back to the idea of collaboration math (1+1=3). We can do more together than we can individually.
- **Greater number of partners expands the number of relationships that can be drawn upon for coordinated efforts**

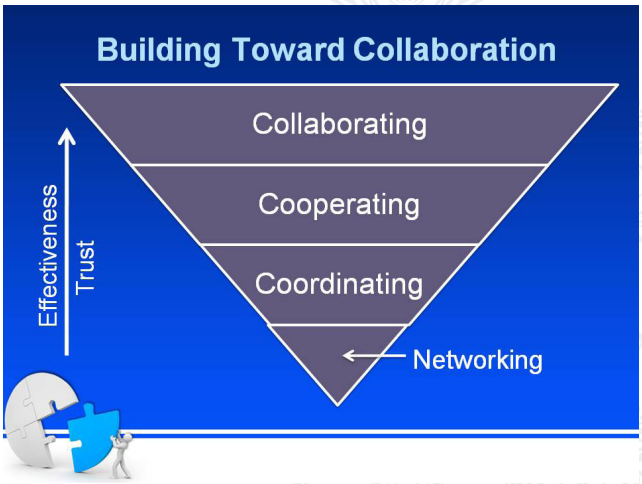
Can you think of any others?"

Slide: 31

Time: 2 Minutes

Instructions:

Groups can interact on a number of different levels. As groups move up the pyramid depicted on the slide, they also increase collaboration, which in turn, increases the effectiveness of the group. Each of these levels builds on the previous.



Script:

Slide: 32

Time: 3 Minutes

"The pyramid model showcases four types of partnerships used to accomplish shared visions and goals. Moving higher up the pyramid involves increased commitment and connections, but the payoff is increased effectiveness. As trust is built among partners, upward movement may become a natural progression toward full collaboration.

Let's take a look at each of these partnerships.

- **Networking** – Exchanging information for mutual benefit means an initial level of trust has been established.
- **Coordinating** – Exchanging information and altering activities for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose requires more time and some access to each other's turf, which requires a higher level of trust among the participants.
- **Cooperating** – Exchanging information, altering activities and sharing resources for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose requires a substantial amount of time, high levels of trust and significant access to each other's turf.
- **Collaborating** – Exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources and enhancing the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose requires substantial time commitments, very high levels of trust and extensive areas of common turf.

Of course, not all partnering will progress from bottom to top. For instance, a group that already knows each other well may be comfortable skipping the initial stages and jumping right into collaboration, while a less connected group may require significant time before advancing. Of course, not every partnership needs to be at the full collaboration level. For SET, however, the top of the pyramid is your goal.

What are your thoughts on this model? What experiences do you have at the different levels?"

Instructions:

While partnering and collaborating with other individuals is important, it is not easy to accomplish. A number of barriers can hinder the work. This slide explores four common barriers. Provide a quick overview of each, then ask participants to discuss how these or other barriers may challenge the work in their region.

Script:

Slide: 33

Time: 2 Minutes

"It's easy to understand why networking, coordinating, cooperating and collaborating with others can greatly expand the capabilities of your SET group. However, barriers frequently make building these relationships more difficult. Let's take a look at some of them.

- **Governmental boundaries (city, county, state) or other 'turf' barriers:** Political boundaries can create challenges as well as spoken or unspoken "turf" barriers
- **No 'big' view of benefits:** Gaining a regional perspective for use of local resources may be a challenging shift to make.
- **Control/trust issues:** Groups/individuals may want to control their own resources. Some may not trust others to make decisions in everyone's best interest.
- **Old rivalries:** Past history can hinder future opportunities, especially if trust is compromised."

Instructions:

Now that various types of partnerships have been explored, have the group make practical application to their own work. Using the groups/individuals identified from Worksheet Three, have them consider potential barriers and benefits of including these new partners. Challenge them to consider how they will address potential barriers. Dividing the list among small groups is a good way to ensure that consideration is given to every potential partner. Allow about five minutes for the exercise followed by a quick debrief of the activity. Be sure that viable strategies are presented to address every barrier raised.

Slide: 34

Time: 10 Minutes

Worksheet Five: Collaboration

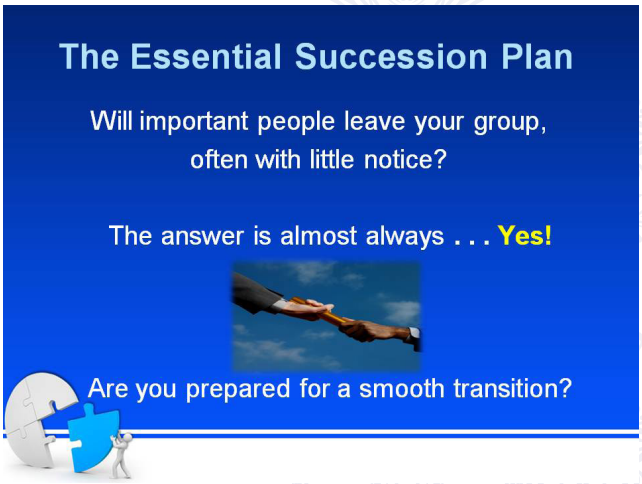
Script:

"Now that we've had a chance to think about various partnerships, let's put this knowledge to work. Using the list of potential groups/individuals from Worksheet Three, think about the potential benefits and barriers to each one. Record these on the table on Worksheet Five. We will take a few minutes for your work, then discuss together. Be sure as you identify potential barriers that you also consider strategies for overcoming these concerns. [Depending on the size of the group and the length of the potential partners list, you may want to divide the group and potentials list into smaller segments so that each can be explored. Allow about five minutes for work.]

Let's hear from your work together. [Allow groups/individuals to give responses. Make sure that viable strategies are presented to address every identified barrier.]

How did thinking through these barriers and benefits change your thinking about collaboration?" [Allow for discussion.]

Instructions:



Show this slide and encourage a brief discussion. Ask your group if they have prepared a succession plan (or have thought about such a plan) for their regional team. In all likelihood they have not. They may not actually get around to creating one until the group has evolved more with a clearer idea of the group's vision and supporting goals (as created in Modules Four and Eight). That's fine, but it is important for them to complete this segment of their overall plan. Ignoring this element causes unnecessary problems and delays when key people leave the group.

Slide: 35

Time: 4 Minutes

Script:

"Part of building a good regional economic development team is understanding and creating continuity and sustainability for your organization. By show of hands, how many of you have witnessed an unexpected exit of an important person from a planning committee? In all likelihood, if you have been in many groups for an extended period of time, you've seen this happen. When you look back on those instances, did the group have a succession plan already in place for the departure of key members? If there was no plan in place, what happened? What were the negative impacts? [Allow for limited discussion.] If there was a succession plan in place, how did that go? What were the positive benefits of having that succession plan in place for the organization? [Allow for short discussion.]

Many groups find creating a succession plan challenging until they identify the group's vision and supporting goals. That's understandable. As you begin this task in Module Four, developing a succession plan will become an easier task, but one which should be given high priority soon."

Instructions:

While writing the succession plan will not likely happen right now, laying a foundation for the plan is an important step.

Script:

Slide: 36

Time: 5 Minutes

"Regional economic development initiatives take months, if not years, to accomplish. Ideally, the original talented leaders who created the project stay on until the goals are fully accomplished, but that seldom happens. Any number of circumstances can lead the busy, talented people that compose your group in new directions (job transfers, retirement, other opportunities, etc.) If you have a well developed succession plan in place, filling the shoes of your valuable exiting member will be smoother. However, the time to do this is not as he is walking out the door – establish your plan early!

Several key ingredients can help ensure a plan will facilitate smooth transition. For instance, the plan should include a brief job description of each role in the group. Each description should include duties, needed skills and time commitment. Coupling these with a clearly written mission statement will help you effectively recruit a new talented and energetic person to fill the desired role.

In addition to helping fill a leadership vacancy, clearly defined responsibilities and duties for all team members will contribute to a shared work load rather than an unfair demand placed on one or two members. The more you spell out the position duties and the estimated time to accomplish them, the more effective your team members will be.

The plan does not have to be a long document. Think through the obvious pieces of information any committee member would want to know. The secret is to create this succession plan at the beginning of your regional economic development effort, not months or years after your group has been in place. It will help attract your charter members in the beginning, as well as recruit additional members to follow in the positions of those who will inevitably leave."

Script (Cont.):

[At this point, talk to the group about the timing of writing their plan. If they are a newly forming group, they may wish to wait until after Module Four when their vision statement is established. However, even if waiting is appropriate, have them set a deadline for completing the plan and consider having them draft at least an outline of what they would like to include. If the group has been together long enough to already have a plan, have them set aside time to review the plan together to see if all of the elements discussed here are included. This is an important foundation piece of a strong, long-lasting initiative.]

Slide: 36 continued

Time: 5 Minutes

Instructions:

A great way to summarize Module Three is to highlight a 2010 report by the Council on Competitiveness that showcases the seven key habits that lead to a highly effective regional leadership team.

Script:

"As a summary to this session, I want to share the highlights of a 2010 article published by the Council of Competitiveness to showcase seven habits that promote highly effective regional leadership:

1. **Be proactive:** Anticipate needs, then create strategies and the means to address them.
2. **Begin with the end in mind:** While action depends on leadership, accomplishments depend on shared vision. Beginning with the end in mind is as much about process as it is about outcomes.
3. **Seek first to understand, then to be understood:** Gather facts in order to make sound decisions. Understand the region by securing data, determining assets and liabilities, as well as opportunities.
4. **Put first things first:** Leaders need to be guardians of the big picture – vision, goals and strategy.
5. **Think win-win, be inclusive:** Seek win-win opportunities to make the case for regionalism. Promote inclusion.
6. **Synergize:** Find the crossroads where institutions (education, financial), firms, political jurisdictions and public agencies intersect to foster collaboration and build synergy.
7. **Sharpen the saw:** Develop metrics tied to measurable goals. Develop future leadership that will be able to step up at some future point.

Which of these habits stands out most in your mind? Why?

As we close this session, think about how these habits can strengthen the group."

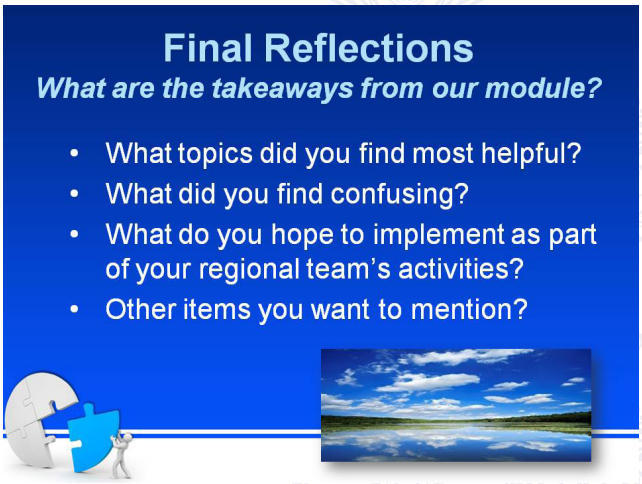
Slide: 37

Time: 5 Minutes

Source:
Leiken, S. & Kempner, R. (2010). The seven habits of highly effective regional leadership. In Council on Competitiveness, *Collaborate: Leading Regional Innovation Clusters*, (pp. 56-60). Washington D.C.: Council on Competitiveness, Retrieved from http://www.compete.org/images/uploads/File/PDF%20Files/Final_Collaborate.pdf
Modeled on Stephen Covey, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (New York: Fireside Press, 1990)

Instructions:

It is critical to allow time for the participants to reflect on today's session and consider how they will use the information they've learned. When they have all had a few minutes to think about the questions on the slide, ask everyone to share one thing about Module Three they consider valuable. Don't let people go on for too long.



Slide: 38

Time: 5 Minutes

Script:

"Think about what we have done today in Module Three. I'd like you to consider the questions outlined on our slide. Take a moment to jot down your thoughts on these questions.

[Give the group a few minutes to come up with their responses to the questions.]

Let's open it up for discussion. What did you find most valuable or helpful in this session? Are any of the topics confusing to you? What items do you hope your team will implement in the future? Are there any other items you want to mention or comments you want to add?"

Instructions:

Discuss the next session with the participants.

Script:

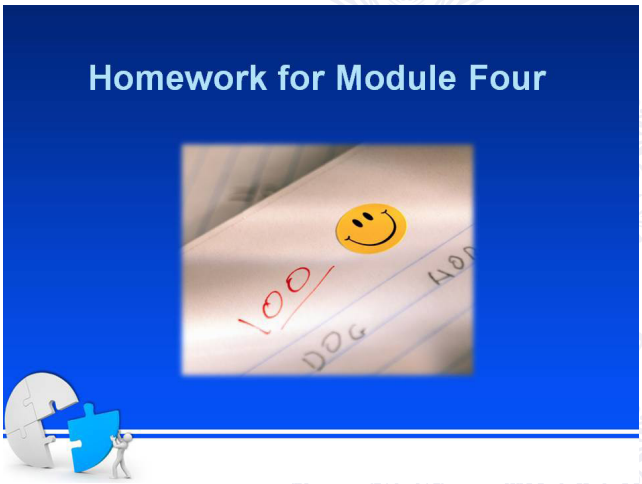
"Let's take a quick look at the items you'll work on in the next session. As you can see, we're going to talk about developing a regional vision and exploring some potential directions."

Slide: 39

Time: 1 Minute

Instructions:

Discuss the homework for the next session and answer any questions.



Script:

"Before the next session, I would like you to complete the following homework…"

[At this point, come to an agreement on what needs to be done as a follow-up to Module Three or in preparation for Module Four.]

For example, you might:

- Follow up with people or representatives of key groups you want to invite to be part of an expanded regional leadership team. Develop an appropriate call to action.
- Determine the resources that might be useful to have for Module Four, such as existing documents that outline a vision or goals for the region (if previous planning has been completed).
- Develop a position description for key roles within your regional team that can be later used to create the important succession plan."

Slide: 40

Time: 5 Minutes

Acknowledgements

The Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program is sponsored by USDA Rural Development (USDA RD), in partnership with the Regional Rural Development Centers. In particular, USDA RD provided financial support for this important initiative while the RRDCs organized the team of land-grant university-based Extension and research faculty who worked on the development of the SET training modules and the generation of the data products.

Key partners involved in the development of SET educational materials include:

- Extension and research faculty from a variety of land-grant universities in the U.S.
- The National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, that works hand-in-hand with the RRDCs and the land-grant university system across the U.S.
- The Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce for granting us permission to use selected portions of its *Know Your Region* training products.

USDA Rural Development
Committed to the future of rural communities.

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

RRDC
REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

www.srdc.msstate.edu
2011