

Today's Presenters



Dr. Audrey Barbakoff
CEO of [Co/Lab Capacity](#) and
[author](#)



Alison Eckes
Customer Experience Director,
Programs and Services, Pierce
County Library System (WA)

Turn Strategy into Action with Theory of Change



co/lab capacity

Dr. Audrey Barbakoff

CEO

Co/Lab Capacity

Alison Eckes

Customer Experience Director – Programs and Services

Pierce County Library System

Our time together

- Real-world context: Pierce County Library System (PCLS) and Theory of Change
- A culture of embracing change
- A tool for empowering people and culture to change





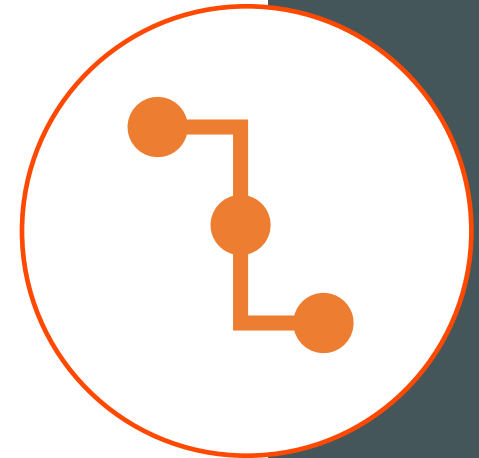
Embracing change

- Check out the webinar [Don't Manage Change – Embrace It](#)
- Change is not a linear path to a predetermined solution; it is dynamic and ongoing
- Change “management” methods often cast change as a problem to be controlled from the top, rather than a culture or practice to be embraced by all (e.g., Lewin’s 3-phase model, Kotter’s 8 steps)
- A culture that embraces change thrives on growth mindset (Dweck, 2007) and psychological safety (Edmonson, 2018)
- In that environment, we can motivate change through clearly communicating an inspiring vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2012)
- Theory of Change is a tool to help us build and share that vision, and a path to reach it



A Theory of Change is...

- A way to clarify assumptions about how change will happen
- A chain of logic you can follow to understand how small, individual actions can lead to big, meaningful impacts
- “Backwards planning”
- Starting with the end in mind, then charting a path to reach it
- Evaluation is built in from the first and is part of planning



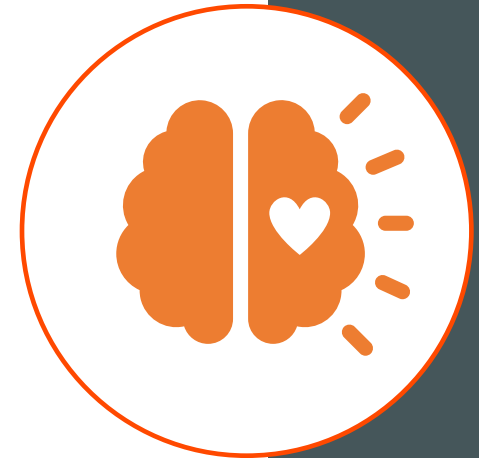
Benefits of creating a Theory of Change

- We all understand success in a consistent way
- We measure what matters – our metrics, goals, and strategies all align
- Keeps work on track by making progress visible
- Facilitates clear communication
- Builds trust through transparency and accountability
- Empowers aligned action and reduces red tape
- Helps us tell our story to the public, community partners, leadership – and ourselves!



The key concept: Outcomes

- A desired change in the user's knowledge, confidence, attitude, awareness, status, or behavior (Mediavilla, Gross, & Walter, 2016)
- It's not about the library's actions or statistics
- Should be able to attribute it to the library's actions
- Needs to be measurable or observable





Input =



Output =



Outcome =



Developing and using a Theory of Change

IMPACT:

What difference am I trying to make in the community?



OUTCOME:

What difference might I see in my end users that would tell me we were making real progress towards that impact?



OUTPUT:

What measurement(s) would help me visualize that progress?



ACTION:

What programs or services could I design to achieve those measurable targets?



INPUT

What resources do I need to make those programs , services, or partnerships happen?

Strategic alignment check: Read it bottom-up using a “so that” chain. Does it still make sense?



An example:

IMPACT:

PC is a community where people are inspired to discover and exchange information and ideas.



OUTCOME:

Youth are supported in school and career so they become lifelong learners



OUTPUTS / INDICATORS:

Number of youth attending STEAM programs; % of participants who say they learned something new



ACTIVITY:

You offer STEAM programs



INPUTS:

Staff time, Maker equipment, supply budget, etc.



IMPORTANT! Start at the end.

You can't chart a path if you don't know the destination.
Plan impacts before activities.



Don't do it alone

- Who are we trying to serve? Who is most impacted? Whose voice is not heard?
- How can that community tell us what kind of difference we should try to make?
- How can we share power and accountability with them to co-create the resulting service?
- How can we decide together what success looks like, evaluate how well we're achieving it, and determine what to do next?



Discussion

- PCLS reflections
- Your questions and challenges
- In the chat: What is one way you might apply this in your role?



Dr. Audrey Barbakoff

CEO

Co/lab Capacity, LLC

audrey@colabcapacity.com

Alison Eckes

Customer Experience Director – Programs and Services

Pierce County Library System

AEckes@piercescountylibrary.org

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