



## **The Green Lights and Red Flags of Sustainable Next Gen Sector Partnerships**

*It's important to periodically check-in on the following green lights and red flags to ensure you are on the track towards sustainability.*

### **GREEN LIGHTS**

#### **THE DOMINANCE OF DOERS**

The partnership is gaining more “doers” than “talkers”, with the former really driving priorities and action plans.

#### **THE CULTURE OF COMMITMENT**

The partnership is increasingly operating with the expectation that all participants must contribute to, rather than take from, the effort.

#### **THE LEVERAGE OF LEADERSHIP**

The partnership’s leaders are expanding their personal commitment, leveraging their networks for new champions, encouraging current champions to deepen their own commitments, and actively addressing the sustainability question.

#### **THE DISTINCTIVE DIFFERENCE**

The partnership is getting clearer about its unique role as an intermediary between the sector and the community, distinct from existing industry associations and other partnerships.

#### **THE REALITY OF RESILIENCE**

The partnership is showing that it can adapt and move forward as it faces inevitable obstacles in the transition to and early stages of implementation.

#### **THE REAPING OF REWARDS**

The partnership is gaining traction, attention and financial support for its ongoing activities and services from multiple public (federal, state, county, program) and private sector (employers, foundations) sources.



## **RED FLAGS**

### **THE SLIPPERY SLOPE**

Business champions are getting increasingly quiet and disengaged, deferring to community partners who are increasingly treating them as customers, which only causes them to become further disengaged.

### **THE SUPPLY-SIDE SUBSTITUTION**

The community partners are increasingly pushing their agenda rather than supporting employer-driven priorities.

### **THE AMBIGUITY ANCHOR**

Business champions and community partners are having trouble getting specific about outcomes and actions, especially "early wins," unable to articulate them in writing in the form of an action plan, "weighing down" efforts to transition to implementation.

### **THE GRANT GAME**

Partners are becoming more focused on grant-seeking than securing diverse financial and in-kind resources to support implementation of partnership priorities.

### **THE TURF TRAP**

Organizations are wanting to take over all or part of the partnership's agenda, but are unwilling to commit to specific responsibilities in the form of a written memorandum of understanding.

### **THE NARROWING NICHE**

Partnership agenda is increasingly focused on a single priority (i.e. workforce training) rather than addressing a broader set of sector competitiveness needs, risking disengagement by employers who need more than one "what's in it for me?" choice to stay in the game.

### **THE DONE DEAL**

Partnership agenda is feeling stale and redundant as a result of not periodically revisiting opportunities and requirements for sector growth.

### **THE KEYSTONE CONUNDRUM**

The partnership is increasingly dependent on a single leader--either an employer chair or convener--who plays an indispensable role. Without that individual, the partnership would lack the industry and community engagement needed to sustain itself. The trick for a sustainable partnership is a set of *important* but not *indispensable* leaders.



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