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10 Easy Steps to a Good Deliberative Event

1. What are your objectives?

Clear objectives are key to defining the overall theme of a deliberative event and its end purpose. This in turn enables effective post event evaluation.

2. To deliberate or not to deliberate?

Are you right to deliberate? Good deliberation should enable participants to learn, discuss, challenge their own perceptions, gain insight and reach decisions or recommendations.

3. Stakeholder mapping

An effective event must involve the right participants - map out those with most interest or influence in regard to your project and why they should participate.

4. Effective participant recruitment

How will you recruit participants? Is it an open invitation to the general public? Or do you want to target specific groups: the seldom heard; organisational representatives; employees or providers? Each will require a different recruitment method from postal to online, face-to-face or through gatekeepers.

5. Scope out the methodologies and activities

How will you prepare participants in advance of the event? What communication material will they need? How best can you give participants the information they need on the day in order to deliberate? Choose methods to ensure the event is engaging, interactive and innovative.

6. Logistics and front of house

Never underestimate the importance of logistics. Does the venue have the appropriate facilities and capacity and, is it easy to get to? Do you have name badges? Who is meeting and greeting? Are the refreshments organised? The list goes on and every small detail should be clearly managed.

7. Presenting information on the day

If you need to use powerpoint make it visually interesting - keep it short and sweet. Integrate other options, video footage, 3D models, visual aides, Q&A panels, interactive games, storytelling techniques, voting handsets etc.

8. Facilitated discussion

Use trained facilitators to encourage the flow of conversation, help participants, create a safe environment and capture discussion points.

9. Ensure it is inclusive, transparent and meaningful

Give participants the time and tools they need to be able to contribute. Don't hide the facts or bias information. Ensure it makes a difference.

10. Give feedback and evaluate

Give participants the opportunity to feed back their thoughts: use tablet computers, ballot boxes or feedback forms. Evaluate the outcomes from the event and let the participants know how their contributions will be used.