

IAP2 Monthly Webinar: Ask the Experts

Additional questions from the attendees in the chat/question boxes

1. Would it be possible to put links to tools or to spell them out?

RESPONSES:

From **Brenda Pichette:**

Software Products Related to Stakeholder Engagement.

<http://www.darzin.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Software-Products-Related-to-Stakeholder-Engagement-Feb2014.pdf>

Guidelines for Effective Regulatory consultations

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rtrap-parfa/erc-cer/erc-certb-eng.asp>

Interesting resource <http://www.globalhive.ca/>

Evaluation <http://www.c2d2.ca/evaluating-public-participation>

2. (from Phyllis Mockler-Caissie) I find that the toughest group to teach P2 processes to are the Media. How do you convince them that engagement is more than the traditional one-way dialogue (Town Halls) where the public get up to a mic and rant to the government officials (they get on their soap box). Those that attend great engagement sessions spread the word and over the years the attendance by the public at engagement initiatives continues to grow.

RESPONSES

(David Hovde) The cynic in me says the media have often liked the “town halls” because there can be fireworks – that’s the hook, not necessarily the participation/engagement. My experience over the last few years, though, is a bit different. As stakeholders become more informed, sophisticated and active, they have more often engaged the media – which can create interest in more than just the “conflict.” Also, we’ve found it helpful to “educate” the media on the reasons that we engage the public, why is the “right” thing to do, and how it results in better project. One of the other steps we take is to invite the media to our events so they can see (and hear) what goes on, etc. On some projects, we have also referred interested media to the applicable regulatory agencies and encouraged them (the media) to ask the regulators about the engagement, the benefits, etc.

3. (from Adrienne Heim, San Francisco Metro Transit) If you set up an open house to present information in a combination to inform and consult with participants then how do you

manage public comment if there are more than 50 people led by a cantankerous community group?

RESPONSES:

(Vince Verlaan) initially depends on the phase of the project you are in....very different techniques if you are starting v finalizing a process. Always engage these groups in advance to understand who they are and what their concerns are, make sure they know who is on the other side and how their input has been used, show them the impact of that input, give them a space on the agenda...and if you have to, challenge them to allow others to share their ideas.

(Anne Carroll) First (as narrow-minded as it may sound), I never give anyone a microphone. I always do things in smaller groups. So if a large group showed up with lots to say, I'd find a way to ensure their individual perspectives are accurately documented (preferably by each of them) -- without disrupting everyone else's opportunity to participate. That said, if pretty much everyone is rejecting how the session is set up (I also almost never do open houses), then it's incumbent upon me to redesign in real time -- but I'd still do small groups, document in detail, and so on.

(David Hovde) Like Anne, (above), we never give anyone a microphone. We hold open house (some with many hundreds - a couple over 1,000 - of attendees) and have 6-12 "stations, each representing a functional or similar area (real estate, engineering, regulatory, etc.) such that individuals and/or small groups can interact "one-on-one" with our staff and expert consultants to get information, ask questions, share concerns, give feedback, etc. We also offer paper comment/feedback forms, computer "kiosks" for feedback, and often links to the applicable regulatory agencies so that folks can comment directly to them. In addition, if there's a identified group, we may offer to "go to them" and meet ahead of our public open houses.

4. (Emma Shea) How to do more than the "bare minimum" of engagement with slashed budgets and challenging economic times?

RESPONSES

(Vince Verlaan) Build a small circle of supporters in the community and in your agency, create a good focus question, pick an efficient tool, pilot it with them, and then use a multiplier (each of us will get 10 people by the end of the month), and then Go!

(Anne Carroll) Partner, partner, partner. Bare-bones budgets are my "normal" world. If you have done a good design with clear objectives, know where you are on the spectrum, had identified and analyzed your stakeholders carefully, you can partner with key stakeholder organizations to have them engage their own stakeholders. Much better content, can all

happen at the same time, uses almost no cash resources, and builds wonderful relationships along the way. Win-win-win...

(David Hovde) Sometimes, the most simple, straightforward, low-cost efforts are also the most direct and effective. Partnering, as Anne noted, can be very useful. Many times, I also “encourage” interested groups and organizations to develop/offer engagement forums (at their time and cost) and I offer to attend.

5. There were requests for links to the webinar on evaluating P2. [The video may be viewed here.](#)