

# Model workshop plan

## A design checklist for productive, satisfying events

For anything from half-day workshops to 2-day summits

### 1) Welcome [Convenor: 5-10 mins]



- welcome to all
- acknowledgement of country
- why we're here: "The purpose of this day is to ..."

### 2) Preliminaries

[Facilitator, being dynamic: 10-15 mins]



- icebreaker introductions \*
- ground rules / online orientation \*\*
- running order
- housekeeping

### 3) Purpose and scene setting

[Convenor: 5-15 mins]



The convenor states the purpose of the day, sets the context, and describes how the outputs will be used. Always clarify what is out of scope!

### 4) INITIAL interactive session

[Facilitator: 20 mins]



Start by hearing and validating the participants' own knowledge before forcing them to listen to experts (you'll be surprised at what you find out).

Suggested questions: "What's top of mind?", "What insights can you share?", "What have you seen that works?"



### 5) Inspiration and information

[30 mins to a whole morning]

Prepare people mentally - with inspiring videos, a factual slide-show, briefings from experts: interspersed with small group discussions, Q&As, or practice in pairs.

Hints:

- Present inspiring positive stories to excite fresh thinking; use humour and a light touch to create optimism; create self-efficacy by "showing how, not telling why".
- Firmly brief the speakers! Give them a limited timeframe, a specific question to address, and a limited number of slides: "You have 10 slides and 10 minutes: get straight to actionable insights and lessons that matter to this specific audience; avoid non-essential detail."
- End this phase with a "What occurs to you now?" interactive for participants to validate and build on what they just heard.



### 6) Group work sessions

[Facilitator: 20-40 minutes for each session]



- Pose an open optimistic question: "What would make the biggest difference to a positive future / desired outcome?"
- Give clear instructions about how to answer it (for example, with Post-it notes), demonstrate the method.

Start with silent writing so all have a chance to get their ideas down.

Prioritisation: Get them to rank the ideas, (not you). Use dot voting.

Appoint facilitators and scribes for tables or breakout rooms.

Create templates to enable knowledge to be recorded.

Hints:

- Carefully instruct the facilitators on their role.
- Ensure the reporting is focused and brief (e.g. give a time limit, or just take a 'taste' of the room)!
- Online breakout rooms always need written instructions! Distribute a Word file, before the event, with step-by-step instructions and spaces for scribes to record discussions.
- Remember to maximise physical movement (use energisers, 5 minute walking reflections, pairing with a new person, rotating groups between stations).



#### \* Icebreakers

Any method, the funner the better, that includes people sharing in pairs ('the 10 Minute Rule' - within the first 10 mins everyone should be genuinely heard by another).



• Speed dating: "How many people can you find something in common with in 4 minutes?"

• Lining up, clustering, becoming a human map:

- "In pairs,
  - share something you're proud of.
  - share an activity, place or thing you love.
  - tell 2 truths and a lie."

#### \*\* Ground rules

• Dynamic gestures for 'yes', 'no', 'unsure', and 'need attention' (demonstrate and practice).



- Phones off or on silent.
- Feel free to stand, walk around, take a break.
- Show respect by listening attentively to each other.
- There's limited time, so can we stay on topic?
- No personal criticism (where this might happen).
- If you're senior staff, today could be a good day to listen.
- Positivity: "And not but".

#### Online commitments

- 1) To be present (phones off, video on).
- 2) To be human (use physical gestures, walk away if you need to, freely chat).
- 3) To sharing the space (keep to time limits, stick to questions, listen, be curious). [Thanks Penny]

Stuff that makes a GIGANTIC difference (and is easy to forget.)

### 7) Conclusion [10-20 minutes]



- A final word from all. [Facilitator]
- Warm thanks. [Convenor]
- A commitment to what happens next. [Convenor/senior figure]
- Special thanks. [Convenor]

"I've developed this over many years. it always works!"

I've never been able to fit it the facilitation training, so here it is as a stand-alone.

Please share it."

- Les

