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The Ultimate Guide to Equitable, Effective, Public Engagement



Done with hearing from the same 20 people at every Town Hall?

Use this checklist to ensure your engagements are actually reaching a representative sample of your community, so you can trust the feedback you gather, and host an equitable engagement that makes all of your community's members feel seen and heard.

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1

Planning (2 Months Prior to Launch)

Make a list of your community's key stakeholder groups



Tip: Don't forget about your local Indigenous Communities!

Highlight any demographics that have been difficult to reach in the past Research and make note of relevant community influencers or community groups who coincide with these hard-to-reach groups



Tip: Community groups *do not* have to coincide with the topic of your engagement. In fact, it's best to find groups who you'll be able to call upon time and again whenever you launch a new engagement. The key is to find community groups that are in touch with demographics who have been historically under-represented in your engagements.

Set specific SMART (Systematic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals for the number of local participants you'd like to engage, and the demographic breakdown of these based on Census Data

Plan a variety of ways for community members to engage

Online

Over Phone

Pen & Paper

In-Person

Anticipate Barriers

Plan to ensure your online engagement & promotional materials are WCAG AA compliant

Do any of your key community groups speak a different language, or require unique outreach methods?

Make an action plan to accommodate these



Tip: Don't take shortcuts when it comes to providing engagement options in alternate languages. If you're going to translate your survey, be sure to translate promotional materials, supplementary videos, and anything else that will allow users to have the same quality experience in any language.

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Write (1 Month Prior to Launch)

When writing your engagement, include information that would be compelling to your hard-to-reach groups (i.e. if you've historically had trouble reaching youth, include how this decision is liable to affect their local recreation programs, or school)

Include a section of the engagement where you gather information on the demographic make-up of the participants, so you can audit your success



Tip: Help overcome participant's weariness around providing demographic or identifying data by reassuring them of the security of your system, and discussing why demographic details are important for ensuring proper representation.

Include an option for your participants to opt-into future engagements, so you have an easier time reaching a representative sample in future



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Outreach (3 Weeks Prior to Launch)

Make a list of outreach methods that you'll be using to inform your community of the engagement

Press Release

Email Push

Mailouts

Phone Campaigns

Social Media Posts

In-Person Engagement Stations

Billboards

Posters

Social Media Advertising

Community Hub Partners

Local Newspaper

Radio



Tip: Keep one document with staple copy that you'll be using across your promotional materials, to make applying this copy to various outreach templates easier, and ensuring consistent messaging across the board.

Reach out to relevant community influencers / groups to see if they'd be willing to provide a quote for you to use in your promotional materials, and help boost your engagement to their networks

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Target (1 Week Prior to Launch)

Draft campaigns with messaging that speaks directly to the groups you're trying to reach



Tip: Community groups are great resources to use if you're not sure what issues or messaging will resonate with a particular demographic. When in doubt, ask.



Tip: For easy, effective advertisements, use quotes directly from your community groups and influencers to spark the interest of and speak directly to hard-to-reach groups. Just be sure to confirm this is alright with the person you're citing first!

Target your outreach methods based on the preferred engagement methods of your demographic groups (i.e. sending mailouts to rural neighbourhoods, and providing in-person engagement stations at senior care facilities.)

Equip community groups with ready-to-deploy email templates, promotional material, and advise them of your launch date so they can help boost your engagement

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Engage (As Engagement is Live)

Launch your campaign, and marvel at what a fantastic job you've done thus far

Monitor the demographics of those engaging, measure them against your SMART goals, and keep track of which cohorts remain under-represented

Reach out to community groups, and scale up efforts for under-represented demographics



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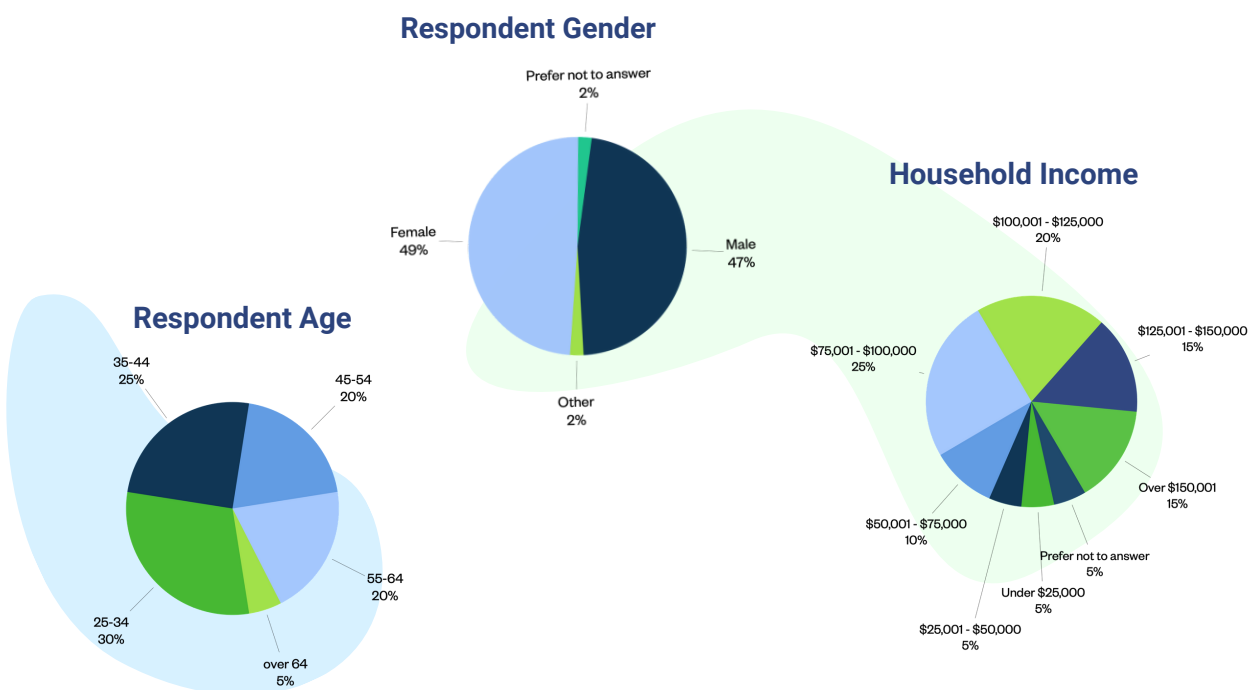
Consolidate & Weight (Post-Engagement)

Ensure votes made across all platforms (online, pen-and-paper, over phone etc.) are all consolidated into one data set



Tip: Look out for suspicious behaviour such as highly repeated IP addresses or phone submissions, and consider weeding out a portion of these entries. The goal is to make sure no one participant or group has an disproportionately loud voice.

Redistribute the weight of votes based on census data to ensure your results are truly reflective of community sentiments





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Awesome work!

Pat yourself on the back and celebrate the successful completion of a truly equitable community engagement!

Looking to accomplish equitable outreach without all of the extra steps? **Let us achieve a statistically accurate community sample for you!**

Book your free Equitability Assessment today!

Our Citizens' Panels are an affordable, time-efficient, and effective way to equitably engage your community. Consult with our team today.