The Action Summit:
Structuring the Action Event to Meet Your Community's Goals

Community-based dialogue-to-change initiatives rely on a mixture of community forums, small, facilitated dialogues and large group meetings. The large group meeting following a series of forums or dialogue circles, often called an Action Forum, is the time to consolidate ideas and experiences from a number of groups and make plans for follow-up action.

Effective Action Summits include a number of elements. The event can be modified to emphasize and support the program goals and the kinds of outcomes anticipated. Here are some tips:

For initiatives focused on action at the individual level—changes in attitudes, behaviors and beliefs
> • Build in ample time for individual groups to report out on their experiences.
> • Ask for individual testimonials.
> • Invite participants to sign a personal pledge to adopt new kinds of behaviors.
> • Celebrate!

For initiatives focused on shared action or institutional change
> • Invite interested organizations to send representatives to the Forum.
> • Provide time and space to showcase organizations and initiatives (include display
> tables and booths).
> • Save time for leaders to "pitch" their work to the group.
> • Recruit leaders and facilitators to convene and work with new action groups.
> • Allow time for new action groups and new collaborating organizations to meet and start their work.
> • Develop processes to keep track of action groups, and provide support when they
> need it.

For initiatives focused on input to decision makers and policy outcomes
> • Working with the policy makers, develop protocols for recorders to collect meaningful, useable information from the circles.
> • Set clear expectations. Describe the kind of input policy makers are looking for, and how the information from the dialogue circles will be collected and used.
> • Set aside time for the circles to report major recommendations to policy makers. Allow time for questions and answers.
> • Capture the information in a summary report, and plan wide distribution through media, web sites, public libraries and other venues.

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