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WHY THIS GUIDE?

We’ve all been there before: sitting in the middle of an event – even a very well-resourced or high-profile one – just wishing we weren't there because it’s a waste of our precious time. All too often, many of us find ourselves wondering why we are in an event or meeting, or frustrated by serious missed opportunities for meaningful learning, connections, and collective impact.

This guide was produced in response to the real need for an accessible, skimmable, and practical resource that summarizes good practices to producing more effective, impactful events.

At Open Gov Hub, we are passionate conveners and community-builders. We know that magic can happen when human beings connect and work together in an infinite variety of planned and serendipitous interactions, becoming far more than the sum of our parts. Our mission is to bring together diverse organizations working to tackle some of societies' biggest problems, stemming from the major disconnect we see all too often between everyday people and those that govern them.

That's why we host over 150 events a year designed to stimulate new ideas and connections between people and organizations for greater shared social impact. We also see the need to continue to diversify our event formats and challenge ourselves (and our peers) to reach a higher standard with our convenings.

So, we wrote this guide to be a living resource for ourselves, the global open government community we are part of, and various people and organizations in related fields who, simply put, are also working to change the world. Perhaps you work international development or human rights, open data or grassroots social justice, or maybe your work is more focused on research or advocacy. Regardless, we believe this guide can be valuable to you and hopefully your peers as well, within and across a wide variety of fields in the nonprofit and social impact space.

By making this resource free and public – and now issuing its 2nd Edition – we also hope this Guide can help inspire and inform the event-planning efforts of many others in a variety of fields - from organizers of large annual global conferences with thousands of participants, to those of us just wanting to know how to plan a more meaningful five-person team retreat, strategy session, or even dinner party. Explore our Guide to find a wealth of practical tips on how to make your next gathering exceptional.

[1] The first edition of this guide was inspired by the blog post “Liberate Us from the Tyranny of Panel Discussions” by Michael Jarvis of Transparency & Accountability Initiative, which lamented missed opportunities for deeper learning at the 2018 World Bank’s Annual Meetings, and a subsequent request by the Open Government Partnership team to address this common problem by crowdsourcing the Open Gov Hub community for ideas for great events.
This Guide is made up of content in four main sections, described below. We also offer several “featured” one pager resources that we believe can serve as valuable, stand-alone resources used at any time.

1. We start with the big picture – 8 universal principles that we think can and should be applied to any gathering – to help you keep it in mind as you develop your event.

2. Then, the first toolkit we provide – the Toolkit of 15 Event Types – gives tips about 15 different event formats for gatherings large and small.

3. The second toolkit we provide – the Facilitator’s Toolkit of 20 Interactive Exercises – gives many short but powerful activities you can embed into the agenda of a wide variety of gatherings to make them more engaging and productive.

4. Lastly, we share additional resources we recommend, and more background about the Open Gov Hub.

Let’s get started with the 8 universal principles for great events!
Remember, it's up to us as event organizations to make explicitly clear for participants why we are gathered and what we all stand to gain. What can this gathering of particular people at this particular time uniquely learn and do together? To have true purpose-driven events requires actively managing of the conversation during the event, and a planning process that starts with a clear goal that all organizers agree on.

2 Be Intentional About Every Detail.

As you plan, make sure that the Who, What, When, and Where of your event all clearly relate back to fulfilling your Why.

3 Engage your Participants from the First Minute to the Last.

Make it easy for participants to stay attentive and engaged by clarifying to them the goal, structure of the event, and how they can engage. And no matter what event format you choose, be sure to always integrate even brief interactive activities and exercises (see the Facilitator’s Toolkit for 20 recommended activities that can be adapted to a wide range of settings).

4 Be Inclusive.

Involve a wide variety of diverse voices for a rich exchange and better outcomes – and prioritize voices from the communities most affected by the issue at hand. Facilitate the conversation in a way that can surface uncommon views and make all voices heard.
5 Be True to Your Word.

Don’t frustrate your attendees or participants by failing to deliver on what you promised. Instead, actively hold yourself and other organizers accountable to fulfill your event goal and stay true to your event description.

6 Use Visuals Often, and Wisely.

Bring more power to your point: remember that many people are visual learners so integrate visuals in a way that can clarify, simplify and enhance – rather than distract from – key ideas.

7 End with Top Takeaways.

We most remember the very beginning and end of any event, so make it easy for your participants to know what are the top ideas you want them to take away, by stating them explicitly at the end.

8 Remember that Feedback is Your Friend.

Plan to collect real-time feedback during the event (so you can adjust as you go), and immediately at the end of your event, and remember to close the feedback loop by reporting back to your participants what feedback you received, and how you plan to act on it!
1. **ALWAYS START WITH WHY.** Designing a great event starts with creating a WHY that clearly and succinctly defines what need the event is addressing and why and how the event will contribute to fulfilling that need. Everything else about your event (location, size, type, etc.) follows from this statement. The quality of engagement increases exponentially when your event participants* understand what the event is for and why they are there.

Your WHY should include three components – a short description of the situation/need your event is addressing, the anticipated change that will occur, and the role the event participants will play. Use these questions as a guide to define your WHY:

**What is the current situation or need that calls for this event?**
*Examples: a) better communication is needed because silos exist between teams in our organization; b) organizations need better approaches for battling shrinking space for civil society.*

Give the context for why you are having your event by summarizing what the problem or issue is, what circumstances have led to this problem or issue, and what is needed to move forward. This is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis but an easy-to-read synopsis of the current situation that surrounds the need the event aims to address.

**What change, improvement, or remedy to that situation or need will occur as a result of this event?**
*Examples: a) create action plans that institutionalize consistent communication between teams; b) share expertise and identify opportunities for collaboration.*

Be realistic but also positive about what one event can achieve. Make sure the desired change, improvement, or remedy is specific and measurable, and extends beyond the event itself. An event that handles a complex issue open-endedly by presenting a series of disconnected remarks or getting people in a room to discuss for discussion’s sake will lead to participant frustration and disengagement. On the other hand, an event with a narrow, prescriptive goal can stifle conversations and ideas. Great events create change by sparking dialogue and guiding participants to purposeful action both during and after the event.

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*For the purposes of this guide, ‘participants’ refers to anyone at an event including speakers, moderators, facilitators and attendees.*
What do you want the event participants to learn and contribute during the event to help achieve this change?

Examples: a) teams will learn about each other’s projects, timelines and needs and create new channels for communication and collaboration; b) participants will share expertise, learn from each other, and foster partnerships.

Decide what skills and/or knowledge your participants will learn AND what they will share that are in line with the desired change. Great events engage all participants as both experts and as learners. See more under Principle #3: Engage Your Participants from the First Minute to the Last.

What do the people want? Sometimes you will want to conduct a needs and resources assessment to help you write or refine your WHY. This usually includes conducting a survey, either electronically or through face-to-face interactions, of the intended participants (or a representative subset) to assess what they already know about the topic, what they want to learn, and what change they would like to see. This helps you test your assumptions and uncover perspectives or angles that you might not have considered.

Examples:

Example A
Weak WHY: Because there is a lack of collaboration between teams in our organization, we are organizing a one-day retreat to create much needed time and space for teams to interact and problem solve together.

Strong WHY: Our teams currently lack the time and space to regularly interact and problem solve together which is creating silos. This retreat will bring everyone together to identify concrete ways to improve communication and collaboration across teams that will feed into each team’s quarterly action plans.

Example B
Weak WHY: A solution is needed to combat the shrinking space for civil society. This event will present the views of a handful of experts that participants can learn from and then be able to apply what they learned in their own organizations.

Strong WHY: Many organizations have tried approaches to mitigate the effect of shrinking space for civil society around the world. This event will showcase the successes participant organizations have had and utilize participant expertise to problem solve how these successes could be adapted to other contexts, as well as identify what opportunities exist for participants to collaborate on this issue going forward.
2. BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT EVERY DETAIL. Every aspect of a great event is designed in line with its core purpose (its WHY). From the size of the room, its location, and its participants – to the content of each segment and its timing – every detail is relevant and requires intentional design. The success of your event depends on:

WHO is in the room:
- If one of the goals of your event is to make changes to how an organization or coalition works, make sure the key decision-makers are in the room.
- Similarly, if one of the goals of your event is to find solutions to a complex, technical issue, make sure people with a variety of relevant experiences and perspectives are present.
- If you are running a session in a large conference, send a personalized invitation beforehand to the key people so that they are more likely to attend.

WHERE & WHEN your event takes place:
- Be mindful of where the venue is located and how accessible the space is to your participants.
- Choose a space that complements the number of participants and the format of your event.
- If you are limited for whatever reason in your venue/room choice, be as resourceful as you can with what you have. Make use of walls, windows, and/or doors to make the space more inviting and interactive. Use creative table and/or chair arrangements to make the space feel more open or cozier.
- The time and duration of your event largely depends on the availability of your target participants and how much content needs to be covered. Energy levels fluctuate throughout the day, tending to be highest in the morning and lowest right after lunch. People tend to be more available at lunchtime but it may not work well if the topic is complex or event requires intensive hands-on interaction. Be aware of under or over-scheduling the time that is needed to fulfill the goals of your event.

WHAT your content includes:
- What information needs to be shared and/or what skills your participants need to learn determines the content.
- High quality content takes a lot of time to prepare and needs to be tailored to who is going to be in the room. An event that lasts an hour or even a half a day takes several days of preparation while an all-day or multi-day event requires several weeks.
- Assume your participants will bring various levels of knowledge about your topic. Prepare the content with the people with the lowest level of knowledge in mind and anticipate questions from participants at all levels.
- Carefully sequence your content making sure the pace is in line with your event duration and with the level of your participants. People have limited ability to absorb lots of information. It is better to focus on the most important takeaways and ensure people learn them than inundate them with too much information.
- Build in break time. For a new idea to truly stick with someone, they need a bit of time to process and reflect on it, eventually making it their own. If participants are overwhelmed with too much content, they are less likely to remember what was covered without any down time to briefly process and reflect.

Be ready to adapt. If a particular aspect is out of your control (e.g. the date competes with another event across town, the only available room is too small/big or windowless, specific people you would like to attend are unable to, etc.), adapt the other aspects accordingly. If the aspect out of your control severely impacts your event’s WHY, consider delaying your event or revising your WHY.
3. ENGAGE YOUR PARTICIPANTS FROM THE FIRST MINUTE TO THE LAST.

Make it clear from the start what the goals of the event are, what will happen during the event, and what is expected of participants. In order to be engaged from the very beginning to the very end, participants need to have a clear understanding up front of what the event is about, what they will learn, and what opportunities there are to share their own experiences and ideas.

Use creative, innovative and interactive event formats as much as possible. Rather than a series of disconnected remarks or presentations from one speaker to another, create space for meaningful audience participation. Too often, audience participation is rushed, dominated by only a few voices, or superficial with questions and comments going unaddressed. Being engaged is the key to effective learning, which is why it’s important to have activities like breakout groups, which give a structured space for brainstorming and exploring questions. Even if you are running a traditional event format like a panel, there are many creative ways you can make it interactive – such as icebreaker games, pairing people to discuss ideas, having participants write responses to a prompt on a flipchart or whiteboard, and more. Explore event types and other interactive activities in the Facilitator’s Toolkit section of this guide.

Humor helps people open up and connect. Humor can be a powerful tool for learning in general, and has the added benefit of creating a shared experience between participants (even if they started off at different levels of seniority, etc.) It also helps stimulate unusual and creative thinking, and signals to participants that out of the box ideas are encouraged.

Tap the wisdom in the room. Instead of stale, prolonged welcome or closing remarks, why not begin or end your event with a provocative, stimulating question? Use a quick audience SMS poll and/or invite them to discuss their answers in small groups or with a neighbor. Polleverywhere (https://www.polleverywhere.com/) is one free program that event organizers can use to quickly get audience input via polls and live word clouds. Kahoot! (https://kahoot.com/) is a free game-based learning platform to get involvement and feedback.

The magic number. Anytime you want several people to be able to contribute equally to a single conversation together, the size of each group cannot exceed 12 people. The ideal sweet spot for a small group size is 6-8 people.
4. **BE INCLUSIVE.** Seek diversity of backgrounds and perspectives that can better help you reach your event goal. This includes proactively seeking participants with diverse backgrounds in terms of age, nationality, religion, opinion, professional and personal life experiences, etc. For example, include speakers from both government and civil society, or from different sectors.

**Key guidelines to creating an inclusive event include:**

- Involve participants who are from the communities that are central to and/or affected by what is being discussed in the event design process and in the event itself.

- Avoid “manels” (male-only panels).

- Dare to debate. Some of the best learning opportunities come from creating a space where people can respectfully explore disagreements. Proactively invite people with divergent views to join the conversation. This helps stimulate new ideas and lets participants decide for themselves where they stand on an issue.

- Create space for all voices to be heard. Make sure no one is actively being silenced. If someone hasn’t spoken, ask them what they think. And if someone gets interrupted while making a point, re-open the conversation to give them back the floor. Adapt your agenda in real-time to make sure important points are heard and not rushed through or cut off.

- Ensure your event is accessible. Design the event and set up the event space in consideration of people who have audio, visual, or mobility limitations. Include in your event description if the venue is accessible to people with physical disabilities and whether interpreters will be provided or available upon request. Ask participants to share on their RSVP what needs they may have and clearly communicate if you able or unable to accommodate them.

- If the event is open to the public, try to use technology to make it as accessible to as many people who are unable to attend as possible (ex: by recording, live-streaming, and/or live Tweeting). Offer a simple handout with the social media handles of speakers, and the event hashtags you want people to use.
5. **BE TRUE TO YOUR WORD.** Be true to your event description (that hopefully includes a version of your WHY statement!) and be clear about how open or closed the conversation is. It can be very frustrating and disappointing to attend an event only to find that it didn’t actually address everything it stated it would, doesn’t follow the format that was promise, or if isn’t clear if the conversation is on or off the record.

Write the goal(s) or why statement of the event as well as explicit ground rules in a place where all participants can see so that everyone can all help hold each other accountable to it. Additionally, make sure all of the speakers and facilitators, including last minute changes or substitutes, understand and agree to stick to the goals of the event. This helps deter individuals from (intentionally or unintentionally) going off on a tangent or pursuing their own agendas.

![Tip]

Bring more power to your point. Have no more than 3 bullets per slide, each with a short phrase. Make sure you don’t display any one slide or visual for too long; you will lose people’s attention and it will interrupt the flow of the presentation. If you play a video, display it as full screen, with nothing else on the screen. If you want to play a video, try muting it and have the speaker talk people through what they are seeing. For other tips on how to use and create effective visuals, see Appendix X.

6. **USE VISUALS OFTEN, AND WISELY.** Many people are visual learners, so no matter what the topic is, it is very helpful to accompany what is being said with visual aids and other multimedia. Make sure that the visual is relevant and that it does not distract from the key point. Ensure presenters do not use presentations that are so long or slides that are so text-heavy that they are no longer beneficial. Let’s avoid death by Powerpoint!

7. **END WITH 3 TOP TAKEAWAYS.** Summarize and read out takeaways. We could all use a little help being reminded at the end of the event what some of the key ideas are. By having someone summarize takeaways, this also equips participants to be able to more easily share those ideas with others who were not at the event. Consider distributing a one-page overview of key ideas before or during the event, and/or via email or social media after the event is over. Here at the Open Gov Hub, many people told us they regretted not being able to attend all our frequent events but still wanted to know about the ideas being discussed. As a result, we started producing monthly “In Case You Missed It” ICYMI roundups, which include 3 quick takeaways from all our public events each month.
8. REMEMBER THAT FEEDBACK IS YOUR FRIEND. Create space for feedback both during and at the end of your event. Capturing real-time feedback during your event allows you to make immediate adjustments to things like content, pacing, and room temperature, as well as ensure unanswered questions are addressed. Soliciting feedback at the end of your event allows participants to reflect on their experience as a whole and to provide valuable information about what went well and what changes could be made in the future.

During...
Designate areas in the room where people can leave feedback on what is going well or what changes they would like to see by writing on sticky notes, flip chart paper, or pieces of paper to put in a suggestion box and incorporate this feedback regularly. Or allocate a few minutes at the midpoint of your event to survey participants on how the event is going so far.

At the end...
The single best time to get people's feedback about their whole experience at the event is when they are still in the room. Always budget at least 5-10 minutes at the end of a program to get feedback – most effective are handouts at every chair/table, or you could conduct a short poll/survey through SMS, use ipad(s) stationed at the room exit, an electronic form sent via email, or other creative ways. Avoid questions that only ask participants to answer on a scale of 1 to 5 (or 1 to 10). Numerical feedback alone does not provide information on what participants thought went well or did not go well and what improvements they might suggest. Always follow scale questions with a question asking for an explanation of the rating. Similarly, avoid leading questions that influence participants to give positive feedback. Ask open-ended questions that encourage honest, detailed answers.
Checklist for Planning a Great Event

This checklist can help you ensure you are following these 8 principles while planning your event.

✓ The WHY for my event is clearly defined and addresses these questions:
  • What is the current situation or need that calls for this event?
  • What change, improvement, or remedy to that situation or need will occur as a result of this event?
  • What do you want the event participants to learn and contribute during the event to help achieve this change?

✓ It is clear WHO the target participants are, and the invitation/announcement process has been tailored accordingly. It has been verified that the relevant key participants and/or decision-makers will be in attendance.

✓ WHERE the event will take place has been reserved and its size and accessibility are appropriate for the intended participants. If the venue options are fixed or limited, creative adaptations to the room have been implemented.

✓ WHEN the event occurs is in line with participant availability and the duration needed to achieve the goals of the event.

✓ WHAT the content of the event focuses on has been carefully thought-through and sequenced with appropriate break time built in.

✓ How the content is presented is ENGAGING from the very beginning to the very end. The event format and activities are interactive, use humor, and center participants as experts AND learners. It is clear to participants from the start what the goals of the event are and what is expected of them.

✓ The event is intentionally INCLUSIVE and involves members of the community(ies) that the topic of the event addresses, represents multiple points of view on the topic, is as accessible as possible to people with disabilities, and is available in some format online during or after the event for those unable to attend.

✓ Event organizers and facilitators will STAY TRUE to the event description and avoid any last minute changes. The goals and ground rules of the event are posted in a central location.

✓ The event USES VISUALS wisely and as much as possible.

✓ The THREE MAIN TAKEWAYS are summarized and shared before, during, and/or after the event.

✓ Time and space are created for FEEDBACK during and at the end of the event. Responses to feedback occur in real-time as much as possible and are clearly communicated after the event.
This section gives an overview of 15 different formats or types of events, to help us all diversify the structure and flow for the events we organize. It provides short descriptions and basic do’s and don’ts for each type. The table below gives a snapshot of what event type works best depending on your event’s primary goal. It is meant to help you get started but is not exhaustive. Feel free to get creative!

### DECISION TABLE: What type of event should I organize?

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<td>Develop a new tool or solution</td>
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<td>Test an existing prototype, tool, or data</td>
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<td>Help people learn or practice a new skill</td>
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<td>Better understand a complex topic through diverse, expert views</td>
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<td>Explore a complex topic through multiple perspectives</td>
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<td>Get feedback on a work-in-progress project, stream of work, or approach</td>
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<td>Share and learn from best practices and/or challenges</td>
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<td>Build trust and rapport amongst a group of colleagues or practitioners</td>
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<td>Promote a new book, report, or website</td>
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<td>Gather diverse opinions and input</td>
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<td>Help build community through face-to-face interactions</td>
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**The Event Organizer’s Toolkit of 15 Event Types**

1. **Brown Bag Lunch**

   **What:** Informal presentations or talks during working hours, usually with one visiting speaker, where participants are encouraged to bring their lunch (also called “Lunch and Learns”)

   **Why:** To inform people about new work or emerging, not-yet-finalized ideas, and to have the presenters get some constructive feedback on their work in progress. How: Here are some tips for BBLs.

   **TRY:**
   - Do maintain the informal spirit by keeping things conversational and starting with a round of introductions.
   - Do balance the time between presentation and discussion, and ask the presenter to prepare 3 guiding discussion questions in advance.
   - Do invite internal and external audiences, but keep the group relatively small (under 20).

   **AVOID:**
   - Don’t have presenters lecture at length and ensure they are open to a candid conversation.
   - Don’t go longer than 1.5 hours maximum (respect the fact that people are meeting during work hours).
   - Don’t be afraid to build in creative exercises with the group (ex: scenarios/role play, small group brainstorming, etc.) – as long as you are using the time to fulfill the dual goals of educating the audience and collecting valuable feedback for the presenter, it should be a success.

2. **Debate**

   **What:** A stage talk that pits two (or more) divergent perspectives against each other; with rounds of conversation and rebuttals.

   **Why:** To explore two (or more) conflicting viewpoints in an engaging way that allows the audience to decide where they stand on the issue, but with a spirit of open learning and dialogue. How: Here are some tips for debates.

   **TRY:**
   - Do alternate between who gives initial comments and rebuttals.
   - Do try including more than two debaters to give more dimension and depth.
   - Do have a well-prepared, professional moderator (ex: a journalist) who will probe, summarize, keep decorum and manage time.

   **AVOID:**
   - Debates that only engage the debaters! Instead use audience polling at the beginning and end, or similar techniques, to challenge the views of all those in the room.
   - Don’t debate a highly nuanced topic without first articulating clear opposing sides.
   - Don’t be unprepared as a debater – practice first!
3. Fishbowl

**What:** A discussion format with an inner and outer circle. The inner circle has an open conversation with 2-4 lead discussants, facilitated by a moderator. The moderator then engages different people from the outer circle (traditionally, the audience) to join the talk.

**Why:** To create more interactive discussion that highlights a few experts’ knowledge but also engages audience members’ often implicit or tacit knowledge on the topic.

**TRY:**
- Do include an open “hot seat” in the inner circle for any person from the outer circle to occupy for 5 minutes.
- Do have a prepared, adaptable moderator who knows the end goal, and the audience.
- Do center the discussion around no more than 3-5 key, guiding questions.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t invite too many “inner circle” experts to avoid imbalance and crowd out room for voices from the outer circle audience.
- Don’t skip explaining how the circles and the hot seat work, and make sure the moderator repeatedly invites new voices to join.
- Don’t let just a few people dominate the conversation or the hot seat, keep it rotating.

4. Hackathon

**What:** An event (usually all day or weekend) where a group of people work together for an extended period of time to collaboratively solve a predetermined problem, build a new tool, or complete a discrete set tasks.

**Why:** Bring unusual suspects together to build something entirely new, or set the time and space to complete numerous tasks for an existing initiative.

**TRY:**
- Do spice up the program with periodic Lightning Talks or other engaging content that keeps participants learning and motivated.
- Do focus on a clear specific goal or challenge, and divide the time so teams can more efficient address it.
- Do encourage friendly competition and award prizes to boost energy and incentives.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t create a task that is too hard (or too easy!) to accomplish in the set time.
- Don’t forget to invite people with diverse skillsets and experiences, and encourage peer to peer skill-sharing throughout the event.
- Don’t over-focus on the end goal, but also evaluate the event’s success by what connections people made and skills they acquired.
5. **Ignite Talks**

**What:** Fast-paced presentations of exciting big ideas, failures, or lessons learned. Ignite Talks are structured, 5-minute rapid fire PowerPoint presentation where 20 slides auto advance every 15 seconds.

**Why:** To tell an exciting success story, showcase a great idea, or share a lesson learned (including from failure).

**TRY:**
- Do have minimal words on your slides (they move fast!).
- Do at least a few practice talks! It really is rapid fire. Spend time finding compelling images and graphics that can convey strong messages in a short time.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t try to cover more than one key idea or story.
- Don’t forget to program and test your slides so they auto-advance correctly.
- Don’t forget to consider adding a bit of unexpected images or humor and have fun with your presentation (especially if it’s about a failure).

6. **Innovation Sprint**

**What:** A cross between a workshop and hackathon that is characterized by many rounds of rapid prototyping in a short amount of time.

**Why:** To develop a new tool or solution to a preset problem or give in-depth feedback on an existing prototype, which should be a tangible product, service or program.

**TRY:**
- Do invite participants with diverse skills and backgrounds.
- Do send materials in advance so that people come inspired with ideas.
- Do have a prize or a seed fund award to enable and encourage innovation.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t have any one person in any group dominate the conversation and ideation process.
- Don’t forget to use colorful sticky notes, flip charts and other visuals - and a stopwatch to time rounds of work!
- Don’t skip carving out time to categorize and summarize brainstorm ideas at interval points.
7. Jeffersonian Dinner

**What:** An intimate dinner discussion for members of a community that has them share personal stories connected to an overarching related cause or social issue they share concern over, usually with 10-12 people around a private table.

**Why:** to spur meaningful interpersonal relationships amongst like-minded peers or deepen commitments to work together.

**TRY:**
- Invite folks that do not all know each other and make sure there is a designated facilitator for each table (if multiple dinner conversations are happening in the same gathering).
- Do make sure that the setting of the dinner is hospitable, warm and signals to participants that they should be authentic and honest in their conversation.
- Do keep the conversation focused on the single issue that gathered everyone, but have prompts that encourage each participant to share personal stories related to the theme.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t forget to plan rounds of conversation around when the dinner will actually be served (ex: warm up around appetizers, deep conversation just before dinner, and one more closing round before dessert).
- Don’t forget to ask about people’s food preferences or dietary restrictions.
- Don’t let the quiet folks just sit back and listen – instead, everyone should share a personal story at least once in the evening.

8. Knowledge Cafe (or World Cafe)

**What:** The audience is divided into small groups (no more than 10 per group) and each have an open discussion on key questions around the session theme. Each table has a facilitator who leads the dynamic and reports back from each table to the full group.

**Why:** Facilitate collaborative dialogue with a large group (World Cafes can break up an audience of 100 to have meaningful conversation through smaller groups) and compile collective wisdom (assuming each participant has an equally valuable contribution to the topic).

**TRY:**
- Do pose a question and allow enough time to discuss potential solutions.
- Do have participants switch tables after 15 minutes.
- Do encourage one active notetaker/facilitator per table who insight sharing with everyone.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t go through this process more than 2-3 times.
- Don’t forget to leave enough time for good report-backs from each group to the whole.
- Don’t hesitate to cut people off as the facilitator if time is short.
9. Panel

**What:** A group of experts are a part of a formal discussion on a topic or are launching a new publication, like a new book, report, database, or website.

**Why:** To inform people about a cutting-edge topic, disseminate key findings from a new body of work, and/or to interactively explore different expert perspectives on a complex topic.

**TRY:**
- Do connect the panelists to each other beforehand and prep intros.
- Do have an active, prepared moderator who will engage everyone.
- Do have discussants that can elevate the launch of a publication.

**AVOID:**
- Do not have a homogenous panel, especially if discussing a topic.
- Do not have more than three panelists on stage at once, and don’t have any panelist speak for more than 5 minutes at a time.
- Do not focus only on the contents of a report, but on the story behind it.

10. Reel Clips and Conversations

**What:** A form of a movie talk that alternates between watching pre-selected video clips, often from a socially conscious movie or documentary on an important topic, with rounds of group reactions and discussion.

**Why:** Videos are an easy way to capture interest and attention and quickly educate a group about a topic, and are widely accessible (ex: via Netflix). But often viewers will have strong reactions to what they watch (ex: on Netflix) but not planned space to process it in real time with others, through organic conversation.

**TRY:**
- Do pick a movie that was selected collaboratively.
- Do try to choose something that is either current or clearly relevant to the audience.
- Do ask pre-thought questions (3-5 per event) to spur discussion in between the clips.

**AVOID:**
- Do not play clips that are longer than 20 minutes or go over 1.5 hours total.
- Don’t let one person take over the discussion, engage others as the facilitator.
- Don’t forget to provide some movie-time refreshments like popcorn or pizza.
11. Roundtable

What: A discussion or a series of short talks around a table among people versed in a particular subject. Usually hosted by a facilitator with targeted questions.

Why: Cultivate a focused discussion on a complex issue in an environment where everyone’s perspective and expertise are equally valued (often works best with a group of 20-30 people).

TRY:
- Do keep the discussion at each table focused on pre-determined questions.
- Distribute handouts or pre-work to prime people with the same background and ensure participants can come with valuable contributions.
- Curate list of diverse invitees and have a clear agenda.

AVOID:
- Don’t have more than 30 people around the table.
- Don’t invite people that do not have a good background on the topic.
- Don’t cut time too short to allow for in-depth conversations.

12. Townhall

What: A large group get-together designed to seek consensus and solicit feedback.

Why: Inviting all members of a team or community to have a say in decisions that affect the community as a whole, to understand their top concerns and solicit feedback, and to make any big announcements.

TRY:
- Have a run of show ready to go with questions and announcements
- Do use visuals (ex: posters with ideas to vote on) and prompts to easily collect feedback in real-time, face-to-face
Use small group activities to decide on discrete initiatives or goals.

AVOID:
- Don’t call it a town hall if there is not enough time for getting their feedback!
- Don’t forgo the chance to get participatory decision-making.
- Don’t talk at people with an authoritarian fashion.
13. **Unconference**

**What:** A large gathering like a conference, but instead of a set structure, the participants make up the agenda collaboratively on the spot.

**Why:** To create a more participant-led event and focus on peer-to-peer learning, and creating space for organic group innovation around what the participants are most interested in.

**TRY:**
- Give participants autonomy and allow them to self-organize, with a simple structure to do so.
- Collect and vote on session pitches, and report back ideas from the breakout sessions to be shared.
- Use DT Tools to make some sessions more deeply interactive (see box).

**AVOID:**
- Don’t over-structure the format yourself -- the participants are meant to own it.
- Don’t forget to provide any materials, like flip charts, they might want to use.
- Don’t forgo having some structured way to capture results at the end, like a quick survey.

14. **Speed Networking**

**What:** Pairing people up one on one, randomly or purposefully, within a large group to either get to know each other or come up with quick ideas on a given issue.

**Why:** An informal way to get people to interact one-on-one in a quick and structured way and learn more about commonalities and possible joint work ideas between them.

**TRY:**
- Do create diverse groups where people don’t know each other
- Do have a sheet with prompts, fast facts and/or conversation starters
- Do provide some refreshments, like tea or coffee.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t do it in a group that already knows each other.
- Don’t mismatch people who would have nothing to talk about.
- Don’t force it on people – it should be fun!
15. **Workshop**

**What**: A highly interactive, hands-on, actively facilitated format where participants learn concrete, tangible knowledge or skills and share their experiences.

**Why**: Participants acquire a new knowledge base or hone their skill sets.

**TRY:**
- Do make it interactive through activities that resonate with your audience and help them learn.
- Do capture lessons and enable feedback loops.
- Do have an active facilitator that ensures everyone in the room is engaged.

**AVOID:**
- Don’t call a panel a workshop!
- Don’t talk at or lecture the participants or go over time.
- Don’t ignore real-time feedback from participants to adapt as you go.
Dos and Don'ts for Better Panels and Workshops

If you’ve gotten to this point of the Guide, you know that we want us all to use more diverse and creative formats for our events. But we also know that sometimes as event organizers or facilitators we may be limited to more conventional event types.

So - in addition to always applying the 8 Universal Principles for Great Events - here are some specific tips for adapting those principles to two very common event types – panels and workshops – to make them more stimulating, interactive and effective gatherings!

### TIPS for Better Panels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>Don't</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare your moderator!</strong> It’s their job to make sure the conversation is unique and relevant to the audience. They should put significant time in advance to make sure they understand the goal of the panel, the background of the panelists, the audience, and the guiding questions for discussion.</td>
<td><strong>Overload the stage with too many speakers.</strong> Doing this will inevitably crowd out time for meaningful exchange.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cut people off.</strong> A panel is fundamentally about the exchange of ideas, not each panelist simply stating their own talking points.</td>
<td><strong>Run out of time for Q&amp;A. It’s unfair to your audience.</strong> Instead, let audience members write their questions by distributing notecards on all seats. This helps people capture their ideas as they come, rather than feeling anxious about waiting for Q&amp;A at the end.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engage the audience from the start.</strong> You can do this with a simple audience poll via SMS, or an icebreaker (ex: turn to the person next to you and tell them why you came to today’s event, 1 min each).</td>
<td><strong>Avoid controversy.</strong> Instead, ask provocative questions (ex: x vs. y issue). Often the most memorable part of any conversation comes from uncovering where and why expert opinions diverge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make it a conversation from the beginning. Rather than each panelist delivering a speech, give them prompts and ask for brief responses (no more than 5 min each) for a more engaging, lively rounds of conversation.</td>
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### Dos and Don'ts for Better Panels and Workshops

#### TIPS for Better Workshops

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<tr>
<th>DO</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clarify the shared goal for the workshop.</strong> State this at the start and make sure everyone in the room agrees on the purpose of the workshop.</td>
<td><strong>Call it a workshop if it's really going to be a lecture.</strong> Honor your audience by fulfilling their expectations. Any workshop should always be 1) interactive and 2) skill building in some concrete way.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Set discussion norms** - these are guidelines for how the group will effectively use its time together! For example:  
  - **Start and end on time**  
  - **Turn off technology**  
  - **Step up, Step Back** (make space for all voices)  
  - **How decisions will be made** (simple majority? Full consensus?) | **Run out of time for team building or networking.** Often the most value people get even from skill-building sessions is in connecting with other like-minded individuals. So make sure your agenda leaves time for icebreakers, networking (ex: around meals/breaks), etc. |
| **Set roles** – it’s too much to expect the lead presenter or facilitator to do it all. Instead, ask for volunteers or assign simple roles up front (ex: Scribe, Timekeeper, and Notetaker), that will help ensure everyone in the room is paying attention and engaged. | **Schedule any session to last more than 90 minutes.** To stay focused, humans naturally need a break every 90 minutes or so. |
| **Use lots of short interactive exercises throughout the session to keep people engaged.** See our Facilitator’s Toolkit of Interactive Exercises for 20 recommended exercises, which accomplish different objectives. | **Be too passive or too active as facilitator.** Your job is to steer the group towards its goal – for example, by probing challenges when needed but also stepping back when needed to let underlying concerns emerge. |
While our last section – the Toolkit of 15 Event Types – was tailored mainly for event planners and organizers, then this section of 20 recommended interactive activities/exercises that can be built in to a wide variety of meetings, workshops and events we hope will be a valuable resource for event and meeting facilitators.

Remember that the meaning of facilitation is to “make easy” or “ease a process.” Engaging your participants through active interactions is a critical ingredient for success. We hope these 20 recommended exercises, which help fulfill a wide variety of specific purposes/objectives, help you do so!

**Which Interactive Exercises Should I Use?**

We hope this summary table helps you decide simple but important interactive exercises to all your meetings and events!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which Activity Should We Do?</th>
<th>Warm-Up/Team-Building</th>
<th>Problem-Solving</th>
<th>Open Ideation</th>
<th>Open Dialogue</th>
<th>Group Decision-Making</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 Whys</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>80/20 Rule</td>
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<td>Effort vs. Results 2x2 Matrix</td>
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<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective Decision Tree</td>
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<td>Dear Abby</td>
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<td>Do One Thing</td>
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<td>Dot Voting</td>
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<td>Icebreakers</td>
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<td>Improv Storytelling</td>
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<td>Inner and Outer Circle</td>
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<td>Headline/Front Page News</td>
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<td>Human Spectogram</td>
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<td>Six Thinking Hats</td>
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<td>Role Play</td>
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<td>Temperature Check</td>
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<td>User Profiles</td>
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<td>Themed Jeopardy or Other Games</td>
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<td>Visual or Guided Notetaking</td>
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</table>
1. Nine (9) Whys

Have each participant reflect on a current challenge for them – it must be live - - a gap between what they see is needed and have been able to do, a place where they are stuck, a place where they need/want to innovate. Match each person to a partner. Each participant has 5 minutes to talk about their challenge. The other person’s job is a coach: to help uncover underlying causes to their problem. The coach does this but politely but relentlessly interrupting the speaker and asking “why” at critical moments that they hear in the person’s thought process (ex: Why do you think that is? Why do you say that?). Within 5 minutes, the coach should have asked the participant “why” 9 different times, helping steer them to a different way of thinking about the root of their problem. Then they switch.

2. Eighty/Twenty (80/20) Rule

This exercise is based on the Pareto principle, which says that a small number of causes (20%) usually explain the majority of any given problem (80%). So asking a group to brainstorm the the 20% (causes) that explain the majority of their problem at hand can help narrow down a group’s focus on next steps. The goal is to help challenge group energy toward having the greatest impact with the least necessary effort, after an open discussion about the variety of possible root causes behind a problem.

3. Two by Two (2x2) Effort vs. Results Matrix

An Effort vs. Results Matrix is a simple but powerful tool to help a group decide on future actions group members will take to fulfill their collective goals. The 2 x 2 matrix is also a simple tool that can be easily adapted by changing what variables are on the x and y axes.
4. Appreciative Inquiry

A great exercise for any strategic planning or other future-oriented session, where the group identifies assets and wins (rather than challenges) from past experiences. Then the group analyzes trends across this information (lived data, in other words), and uses it to formulate a hypothesis to be tested in future work.

5. Collective Decision Tree

This is a useful tool for navigating a series of inter-related, complex decisions in a context of some uncertainty. A decision tree consists of 2 different types of nodes: chance and choice nodes. Chance nodes are ones you can’t control, but you can guess the probability of occurring. Chance nodes are given an expected value, which is 1 times the probability you think it will occur. Choice nodes represent decisions that you/the group makes. Together, the group should sketch a decision tree starting with the most immediate decision at hand, then including various chance and choice nodes that will affect the ultimate outcomes. Once sketched, the group works backwards to calculate the total expected value/outcomes of different paths up the tree, leading back to the initial decision node and helping them decide which route should be the next course of action.

Example of a Decision Tree to decide what kind of property to purchase: squares represent decision nodes, circles are chance nodes, and each branch is assigned an expected value (in this case, a price) multiplied by the probability of each branch occurring. 

Image credit: http://amsdecisiontreeanalysis.weebly.com/how-to-solve-problems.html
6. **Dear Abby**

People anonymously submit problems/dilemmas they are facing anonymously. Post them to a board and we each adopt a question OR we can have people draw a random question out of a hat OR questions are posted where people can write in answers. Facilitator compiles similar or thematic questions for discussion and additional responses to the question. Another option is anonymous submissions through a Gmail account set up for the purpose. Anonymity was kept by logging into shared account and sending email to facilitator(s) from it.

7. **Do One Thing**

A simple way to conclude any meeting or session is to go around in a circle and ask each participant to summarize – in 1 minute or less – their “do one thing:” one specific action item that they will do in the near future, based on something they learned from the gathering. A scribe should note these on a public whiteboard or flipchart so they are visible to all participants, and the facilitator should set a timeline for when these actions should take place.

8. **Dot Voting (or Wandering Brainstorm)**

The facilitator or other meeting organizers should prepare in advance 3-5 options for an important decision the group needs to make. These are written on one flip chart each, with a brief explanation. Then all participants receive colored stickers (dots) and a limited number of votes to express their top choice(s). Participants can also write questions to specific flip charts to help clarify the options as they wander around the room.
9. Icebreakers!

Don’t underestimate the value of taking time for a bit of icebreakers anytime you need any group of people to have a valuable gathering and take any kind of action together. Icebreakers help establish trust, rapport, and teambuilding that is the foundation for collective action.

Icebreakers can be done with something as simple as an introductory prompt that each participant needs to answer (ex: while writing their nametag for the event/meeting, or at the start of a discussion),

like:

- Where is the most interesting place you’ve traveled?
- If you could have everyone in the world read one book, what would it be and why?
- What is something you can't live without?
- What is your favorite thing about this season?

Questions can also be based on the topic of the event or meeting (ex: what is one word you would use to describe the current state of x topic?)

And just a few examples of specific Icebreaker Exercises include:

- **Draw your partner** – pair attendees and have each person take 1 minute to draw their partner (someone they haven’t met before), then describe their pictures to one another.
- **Two Truths and one Lie** – each participant writes 3 sentences on a notecard – two interesting facts about them and one false statement. Then the group guesses which statements are true and which is a lie.
- **Arts and crafts logic models or strategy description** – Everyone is given time to use magazine cutouts, paper, and various craft supplies to create some aspect or illustration of their work.
- **Balloon game** – Everyone has a balloon with an aspect of work taped on it and throws it in the air, and everyone is asked to work together and keep the balloons up. A “Caller” starts eliminating people with cues like “everyone in a black shirt sit down,” “everyone with sneakers,” etc. Ultimately, one person will try unsuccessfullly to hold up multiple balloons.
- **Taboo jargon or Banned Jargon** – Like Taboo board game, but you have to guess the jargon. Alternatively, a poster can be displayed with a list of “Banned Jargon” terms that cannot be used during the meeting, and anytime anyone accidentally uses them, they need to donate to a jar, buy the group coffee, sing a song, or something else.
10. **Improv Storytelling (ex: Let’s Take a Trip!)**

Each participant finds a partner. The pair uses the improv principle of always responding to what their partner says with “yes, and...” to build upon previous ideas and develop a fictional story in response to a prompt. One prompt could be, “Remember that time we took a trip together?” Another might be, “Remember that time we found out the secret to life?” This fun exercise can help build teamwork and warm people up for creative thinking on their feet.

11. **Inner Circle and Outer Circle**

Participants stand in two circles, one inside the other. In the first half of the session, members of the inner circle seek advice or feedback from the person they are facing in the outer circle. The inner circle member must pose one specific question up front, then they can answer clarifying questions from their partner. Their partner in the outer circle should then explain what they would do if they were in the other person’s shoes. Then they switch.

12. **headline/Front Page News**

Participants are grouped together (ideally groups of about 5 people) and are given a large sheet of paper with the outline of a newspaper. Their task is to sketch a newspaper headline that explains what success would look like for their work in the future. In other words, when would the group know that their work is done? Each group should have: a headline, an image; a tagline; and a few bullets summarizing the hypothetical news article.

13. **Human Spectrogram**

In this exercise, the two ends of the room represent two extremes in response to a question posed, with signs posted indicating them (ex: Strongly Agree vs. Strongly Disagree). The presenter asks 2-5 questions, and individuals move to an area of the room to indicate their answer. Highly visual, this activity can be used to quickly and explore diversity of backgrounds and opinions in a group of about 20 or less. Then the facilitator should lead participants in discussing their reactions to the exercise – what most surprised them, etc.
14. Six Thinking Hats

This exercise can help with group decision-making because each person is arbitrarily assigned a specific function and role in conversation. This helps people step outside their typical modes of thinking and helps the group explore a decision from multiple sides. Each person is assigned a colored “thinking hat,” helping ensure that a variety of information is surfaced in conversation to help enable a better decision/outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hat</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>The White Hat calls for information known or needed. “The facts, just the facts.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>The Yellow Hat symbolizes brightness and optimism. Under this hat you explore the positives and probe for value and benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>The Black Hat is judgment - the devil’s advocate or why something may not work. Spot the difficulties and dangers; where things might go wrong. Probably the most powerful and useful of the Hats but a problem if overused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>The Red Hat signifies feelings, hunches and intuition. When using this hat you can express emotions and feelings and share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>The Green Hat focuses on creativity; the possibilities, alternatives, and new ideas. It’s an opportunity to express new concepts and new perceptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>The Blue Hat is used to manage the thinking process. It’s the control mechanism that ensures the Six Thinking Hats® guidelines are observed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When your goal is to generate as many ideas as possible, a few simple rules can go a long way to produce a high quality brainstorm/open ideation session: temporarily suspend all judgment (i.e. write every idea that comes to mind on a separate sticky note); go for quantity over quality (there will be time later to refine); set time limits (a few rapid fire rounds generally work best); and use word associations or other simple mental exercises to open up a wide realm of possible ideas for a group to explore. Mind Maps are a great way to do this visually, by beginning with a key word or concept in the center, then drawing a ring of associated words around that, then a next ring of words associated with those words, and so on, until you start to notice interesting connections between concepts on the page.

15. **Rapid Rounds of Open Ideation (ex: Mind Mapping)**

When your goal is to generate as many ideas as possible, a few simple rules can go a long way to produce a high quality brainstorm/open ideation session: temporarily suspend all judgment (i.e. write every idea that comes to mind on a separate sticky note); go for quantity over quality (there will be time later to refine); set time limits (a few rapid fire rounds generally work best); and use word associations or other simple mental exercises to open up a wide realm of possible ideas for a group to explore. Mind Maps are a great way to do this visually, by beginning with a key word or concept in the center, then drawing a ring of associated words around that, then a next ring of words associated with those words, and so on, until you start to notice interesting connections between concepts on the page.

16. **Role Play or Scenario Planning**

Participants are broken up into small groups, each group is given one copy of a detailed hypothetical scenario of a challenging situation as a prompt, and each person in that group is assigned a different role. The group then discusses how they would respond to the challenge in the scenario, wearing the specific hat of the role they are assigned. Afterward, each group member reveals their role/identity and debriefs on what the experience was like.

17. **Temperature Check or Fist of Five**

At numerous points throughout any meeting or event, a facilitator can take the temperature of the room by asking participants to go around and say just one word about how they are feeling, what they are most curious or confused about, etc. Another visual way of taking a temperature check is to ask the group a question and have all participants simultaneously show how much they agree or disagree by holding their fist (completely disagree), holding out their hand to show five fingers (completely agree), or somewhere in between these two options.
18. **User Profiles**

Break the group into small teams (ideally no more than 5-7 people) and give each group a poster or flip chart. Each group is tasked with sketching a profile of one of their target users/stakeholders/end audience members. This hypothetical character should have a name, a drawing, and a description of who they are, what they care about, what they need, etc. Then, groups can also role play by adopting the persona of their user, and having a conversation or debate that helps uncover how different users may see issues differently.

19. **Themed Jeopardy or Other Games**

Though they may sometimes seem silly, introducing simple games can stimulate greater adult participation in any event or meeting. Friendly competition is a great motivator, and even small incentives help people avoid distractions and be more present and active. Multiple choice quizzes, Pictionary and pub trivia-style games are just some of the many activities you can use, to help participants build relationships, absorb information, and think creatively about new topics. There are also free tools (like https://www.playfactile.com/) to make online Jeopardy games on topics relevant for your group.

20. **Visual or Guided Note taking**

Visual note taking is a great way to enhance the learning experience both for the viewers and the notetaker, where a designated notetaker produces a visual report of the discussion in real time. But don’t let the design distract; instead it should enhance and draw attention to the most important points. In order to do this, use consistent symbols and colors to signal different types of information and importance.
Meanwhile, Guided Notetaking can be as easy as distributing a handout formatted in the way you will be discussing the topic (for example, this sheet has 3 columns for the 3 types of issues we’ll cover, to guide the participants). This is especially valuable if you’re presenting a new schema or way of thinking about something. (Some examples to look at include the Bullet Journaling (http://bulletjournal.com/) approach or the Cornell Notetaking System (http://lsc.cornell.edu/notes.html).

This simply prepares the learner to understand what to anticipate and how to make sense as things progress. *Note: if you are the facilitator responsible for making sure the event/meeting fulfills its goals, then make sure to assign someone else the role of visual or public notetaker!

Image taken from visual notetaker Katherine Haugh’s blog
Additional Resources

We recognize that many others have made important contributions to encourage us all to be more innovative and effective in the events we organize – including ones using design thinking approaches, co-creation processes, innovation sprints, and much more. In producing this brief guide, we have built upon great existing resources, and crowdsourced tips and tricks from our own members and events. Here are some excellent follow up resources we recommend:

**UNIVERSAL RESOURCES FOR CREATING GREAT GATHERINGS**


- *The Art of Hosting* – a website for the global network of communities of practice that offer training on how to harness the collective wisdom and self-organizing capacity of groups of any size. [LINK](https://www.artofhosting.org/home/)

- *The Surprising Science of Meetings: How You Can Lead Your Team to Peak Performance* – a book on how to make the 55 million meetings that we have per year across the U.S. more efficient. [LINK](https://www.amazon.com/Surprising-Science-Meetings-Lead-Performance/dp/0190689218)

**MORE RESOURCES FOR THE ORGANIZER’S TOOLKIT FOR EVENT TYPES**


- *Global Learning Partners Learning-Centered Approach and 8 Steps of Design*. [LINK](https://www.globallearningpartners.com/resources/shareable-resources/)


- *Slido’s 5 Creative Conference Ideas to try in 2020* – a short article that outlines creative session ideas, incorporating the newlywed game and fireside chats. [LINK](https://blog.sli.do/5-creative-ideas-for-conference-sessions/)
Additional Resources

- **Eventbrite’s 20 Creative Event Formats** – a short blog on some creative ways to refresh your conference, including the Human Spectogram. **LINK:** https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/formats-to-refresh-your-conference-ds00/

- **New Event Strategies from Sparks** – an article featuring eight innovative event strategies that are designed to boost audience engagement and encourage collaboration **LINK:** https://wearesparks.com/blog/event-formats-art-refresh/

- **The AEA Potent Presentations Initiative (P2i)** – an article with presentation tips from American Evaluation Association on the message, design, and delivery. **LINK:** https://www.eval.org/page/p2i-home

**MORE RESOURCES FOR THE FACILITATORS’ TOOLKIT FOR INTERACTIVE EXERCISES**


- **Facilitator Toolkit: A Guide for Helping Groups Get Results** – a comprehensive 86-page guide published by the University of Wisconsin-Madison with insights, tools, methods, and techniques that are easy to use. **LINK:** https://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/teams/strat14/FacilitatorToolKit.pdf

- **SessionLab** - a library of hundreds of facilitation techniques and tools. **LINK:** https://www.sessionlab.com/library

- **Gamestorming** - a toolkit for innovators, rule-breakers, and game changers. **LINK:** https://gamestorming.com/

- **Leadership Strategies** – a website with many strategic resources, including free webinars. **LINK:** https://www.leadstrat.com/

- **Aspiration Tech Facilitation** – a website platform that connects nonprofits, foundations, and activists with technology skills that help facilitate their missions. **LINK:** https://aspirationtech.org/

- **Open Tactics Facilitator Guide** – a guide specifically designed for anyone leading an opengov leaders from government and/or civil society. **LINK:** https://opentactics.info/facilitator-guide-intro/

- **Facilitation Techniques from Liberating Structures** – a website with 33 innovative ways to liberate thoughts and enable real (and fun!) engagement. **LINK:** http://www.liberatingstructures.com/
Open Gov Hub is a dynamic meeting place in Washington, D.C. that brings together many organizations working together to promote more government transparency, accountability and civic participation all around the world.

Founded in 2012, we are world’s first coworking community and network focused on this theme of open government, and were one of the first coworking or shared spaces with a focus on social impact.

Our network has grown to now include 50 organizations and about 300 people in Washington, D.C., in addition to 6 global affiliate hubs in several regions around the world.

We were created in response to two challenges: first, that resources and funding are always limited to do the work of social change; and second, break through traditional silos between different sectors and organizations and catalyze collaboration, knowing that any type of social change is far too complex for any one entity to solve alone.

**Our Work By the Numbers**

- Over 150 events per year (average of 3.5 events per week – nearly every day in the work week!)
- Over 1,000 visitors per month
- Member network working on over 100 countries in every region of the world
- 70% of members surveyed collaborate on a regular basis
- 90% of members surveyed feel that have benefited by being part of the Open Gov Hub collaborative space and community
What Our Members Say About What It's Like to Be Here

“The Hub is a vibrant, learning, collaborative, inspirational, collegiate supportive environment”

“There’s always something going on to keep me learning”

“I learn something new everyday from the people I get to work around”

“Endless networking opportunities”

“Having everyone in the same place makes collaboration very easy”

“I love the sense of community...having all the basics I need...and our dessert-sharing culture”

“Being surrounded by committed, enthusiastic workers is highly motivating”

“An oasis from the usual DC office culture”
Plan your next event at Open Gov Hub!

In addition to offering world-class workspace and meeting space in downtown Washington, D.C. for our members, we also rent out our meeting and event space to organizations – for gatherings from 5 to over 100 people. Learn more about our modern, modular spaces and event planning operational support here:

http://opengovhub.org/book-our-space

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We want your feedback to help make this guide even better! If you have any thoughts to share please reach out to us at info@opengovhub.org or find us on Twitter @OpenGovHub.

Working Together to Empower Citizens