

8 TIPS TO IMPROVE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Community insights are effective because they may identify gaps or potential issues not known to the project managers.



Merryn Spencer, Engagement and Strategy Manager at Sutherland Shire Council shared her eight tips to improve citizen engagement in local government.

TIP 1

MOBILE INTEGRATION



How many times a day do you check your phone? Whether it's browsing social media, answering a call or even checking emails, our phones seem to be stuck with us.

Websites, email, online engagement tools must be mobile-friendly to be useful and to optimize the experience. Even a few precious seconds to zoom out can be enough for a person to become disinterested and disengaged.

CREATE BEAUTIFUL CONTENT

Beautiful content means putting your heart into your writing and using words to connect with your audience.

Story-telling and anecdotes are effective ways to engage with people.



TIP 2

TIP 3

HAVE A GENUINE VOICE



Have a strategy in place to drive engagement. This may include using an online engagement platform where you can integrate mobile and social media platforms to drive traffic to your engagement hub.

Consider using a prize incentive, create a video or communicate the value and weight of the communities involved in a particular project.

SOFTWARE INTEGRATION

TIP 4

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involved in a particular project.

Use incentives to drive engagement traffic. Ask yourself the following questions to discover what incentives work.

Incentives don't need to be costly - something yummy, fun or useful (hint - gift voucher) is a good place to start.



"What do I want to achieve?"

"Who do I want to engage with?"

"Why will the community want to take part in the project?"

"What can I do to entice residents to get involved?"

DATA IS KING

TIP 5

Applying both online and offline mechanisms will give you a more rounded response. Focus groups are an effective offline measure to begin with. The results from engaging with focus groups can give valuable insights about how to best interact with locals and what to be aware of before interacting.

TIP 6

RETARGETING

The communications and marketing process doesn't stop once your project is live. It usually takes six to eight touch points before you can get a qualified sales lead. The same goes with engagement. You need to expose your community to the project several times before they're likely to engage.



MAXIMISE DIVERSITY

TIP 7



Your community will be comprised of many cultures. Today, councils should consider cultural barriers and maximizing diversity.

TIP 8

REPORTING BACK

Communicate your engagement outcomes and inform the community of the next steps. Consider using infographics or even a video discussing the end-result.

