



toolbox

How to hold a summit

Want to hold a workshop and don't know where to start? Here are some things to think about as you plan.



Identify Stakeholders

You know your topic, and you know what your audience needs to learn about it, right? Not necessarily! Since you want your participants to gain practical knowledge from your workshop, you must know what they need.

Step 1: Identify the stakeholders in your issue, and make sure they are represented in the planning stages. Ask for planning committee members from each constituency.

Step 2: Find out what they already know about your issue. What interests them about the topic? Where do they see it fitting into their own work? Answering these questions can help speakers tailor their presentations to participants' needs.

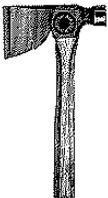
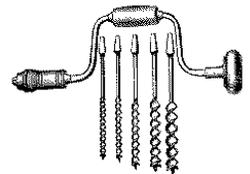
Step 3: Decide as a team what aspects of the issue are most important to cover in the workshop.



Choose speakers wisely

Often, speakers are chosen by their availability, rather than their ability. But there are multiple resources available to help you find dynamic speakers who can fit your schedule and budget. They include:

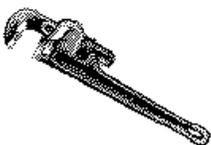
- ◆ Your stakeholders
- ◆ Local colleges and universities
- ◆ Non-profit organizations
- ◆ Local and State Government
- ◆ Schools



Don't forget the coffee!

With the multiple concerns of food and lodging, supplies, meeting locations and times, the first step is to develop a logistics checklist. The team should go carefully through the agenda, and make a list of all needs for each section. Important things to remember include:

- ◆ Room reservations – be sure you get times and dates in writing.
- ◆ Meals and snacks – with so many people watching their health, heavy pastries and sweet snacks are no longer the norm. Be sure to offer healthy alternatives like vegetables and fruits, bagels, etc.
- ◆ Flipcharts and easels, markers, stapler, scissors, and other supplies – it's also good to have supplies for participants. Someone always forgets a pen!
- ◆ Audiovisual equipment – be sure to ask all speakers what they need, and reserve in advance.



Remember – guests aren't familiar with your facilities as you are. Plenty of signs at all entrances let people find sessions quickly and easily. And a friendly staff of trained volunteers can overcome any last minute oversight.