



COLLECTIVE INSIGHT

Newsletter: October Edition

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October Edition Newsletter Topics:

- Engagement is a Human Process
- Find Your Engagement Window
- Engagement in Climate Research
- 2023 GSA Conference

Sometimes we must step back and simply recognize we can't win them all. These are the days that remind us that this is a human process - a process we cannot control, but rather nurture.

So, we nurture. We trust the process. We conduct the required follow-up. We complete all our next steps. We debrief with meeting participants to understand what could have gone better. We review survey findings and learn what people want from our next meeting.

We. Simply. Keep. Going. With time and consistency, we eventually have a great meeting.

Yes! there is nothing better than that 'turning point' meeting - when it all comes together - especially after a few contentious meetings and questioning our own valued methods. We live for that moment in a meeting where it all 'clicks'-- meeting participants understand and appreciate the process. Previous breakdowns in trust are mended. People start to see their time is valued and that being present is worth it. That is why we do this work.

So, fear not. Even the engagement 'experts' have 'bad' meetings. But, like you, we hang in there, we reflect, we keep going.

Engagement Topic of the Month: Engagement is a Human Process

Sometimes a meeting goes wrong. Or, sometimes it feels like your process is broken. You may just be asking, "What's the point, again?" Even with our extensive experience and our tricks of the trade, we have *those* meetings - meetings where it felt like people didn't want to be there or seemed frustrated (or even annoyed) with the process.

We too have meetings where we step back and question engagement. We did our homework: we planned agendas, we shared information ahead of time, we were genuine and present in discussions, we listened, we documented, and we followed-up. So, what went wrong? Nothing.

During these times we remind ourselves that nothing went wrong. We remind ourselves that engagement is a human process. We, as facilitators, are human. Those we engage are human. We have good days. We have bad days. And even more importantly, good engagement requires trust. Don't underestimate the time it takes to develop trust, nor the impact trust plays in the success of your meeting. You can plan your meeting for days and cross your T's and dot your I's, but if you don't have trust, you will probably walk away feeling like you missed your mark.

Feeling like you just aren't reaching that 'turning point' meeting?

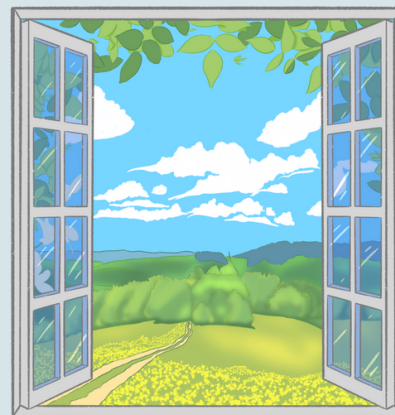
Work with Collective Insight to evaluate your engagement process. Visit our website to learn more about our Technical Assistance services [here!](#)



Engagement Tip of the Month:

Find your engagement window

What is an Engagement Window? An Engagement Window is the window of time in which your engagement process can influence important program, policy, or research decisions.



Engagement is only meaningful when it is done in time to make a difference. Engagement Windows are about framing your engagement around these opportunities. This may seem obvious, but a disconnect between decision making and engagement frequency is actually quite common. It also is annoying to those you engage. So, Ask yourself, "What important decisions need to be made, and how can engagement inform these decisions?" Then, be open with those you engage about when and how decisions are being made.

What does this look like in practice? Let's say you have started an advisory group to inform the design of a survey. It is unwise to host quarterly advisory meetings when important survey decisions need to be made within the first two months. Instead, monthly meetings can be used to inform the survey's focus areas and target groups.

A failure to identify Windows of Engagement can make even the most well-intentioned engagement process feel like an afterthought. Make your engagement count. Use Engagement Windows to ensure people's time is spent wisely and their input actually makes a difference.

Find (and walk through) those Windows!

Engagement Spotlight!

Check out this article from Johns Hopkins Magazine, [“Rebooting Our Warming Cities”](#) to learn how Baltimore researchers are involving community leaders in climate research.

This recent work in Baltimore asks us to challenge our biases about where community members can and should contribute to research impacting their lives. As noted in the article: “Co-production of research between scientists and communities is something new for us.” But if it succeeds, it could pay off big for Baltimore, the nation, and the world.” (Popkin, 2023).

Meet us at GSA!

Planning to attend the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Conference this November? Stop by the UMass Boston booth to pick up some Aging PCOR Learning Collaborative swag! Collective Insight members of the Learning Collaborative team will also be in attendance to learn and connect with others committed to engagement. See you there!

Looking for Help with Engagement?

Collective Insight, a certified Women-Owned Business, is an engagement company you can count on to take you from concept to outcome.

Learn more [here](#) or email us at info@collectinsight.com



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