

20 Ways to Promote your Consultation

Letting people know about the opportunity to get involved in your project is critical to the success of any community engagement process. Online community engagement is no different from traditional methods in this respect. Here are 20 ideas to get you started. If you have any others, please tell us so that we can grow this list.

1. Place a prominent link to your Bang the Table page on your corporate website. Link boxes can be obtained from www.bangthetable.com/banners
2. Pick an easy to remember URL and promote it, e.g. www.bangthetable.com/newcastlebuses
3. Distribute a traditional media release with a snappy headline to your local media outlets, e.g. "Council wants you to Bang the Table about....."
4. Write an opinion piece for the local newspaper – chances are that they are desperate for content.
5. Get on the local radio and talk the issue up... remember to mention the URL.
6. If you are in a regional area and the issue is big enough, get on regional TV – WIN, Capital, NBN – and talk up the project.
7. For Councils, put a note in with your next rates notice.
8. Make the URL prominent on all of your project collateral – newsletters, public signage, letterhead.
9. Hand out leaflets with the URL prominently displayed at public events, in the mall, at railway stations, and places where people meet in your community (clubs, pubs, libraries, corner shops).
10. Integrate you web consultation with your face-to-face processes – e.g. give your "community reference group" privileged access to the forum by making them part of the "project team". Ask them to tell their friends and family.
11. Hand out flyers at your public meetings, open-house days, kiosks etc.
12. Ask interesting questions! Instead of "What do you think about chapter 7..." try, "What would you do to improve....?"
13. Interact with visitors to the forum – they are more likely to come back and much more likely to tell their friends that you are listening.
14. Search the internet for local groups with a web presence and paste a link from your project into their forum.
15. Direct email your entire staff to let them know about the project – make the URL prominent – and ask them to pass on the email to their friends and family.
16. Direct email local community organisations as above.
17. Ask local libraries, cyber cafes and other places where people access the web to display signage and/or instructions for joining the consultation.
18. Talk to local schools who, for some issues, may be interested in assisting pupils to participate.
19. List your consultation on active local Facebook pages and other social networking sites.
20. Use online engagement tools repeatedly to build a community of people you can contact every time you launch a new project.