ENGAGEMENT 101
Open Space Technology

This simple design allows people to “follow their passion” and set their own agenda. Open Space helps move ideas into action and generate commitment.

How it works

- People are seated in a circle of chairs
- The facilitator invites break-out group topics
- Individuals step forward and post their topics on a grid (time, place)
- Groups meet (could be 2 or more rounds)
- Everyone reconvenes, each group shares highlights

When to use it

- To provide an opportunity for people to “step up” according to their interests
- To allow people with shared interests find each other
- To activate a group or community that’s ready to get to work

Tips and cautions

- The open format could be unsettling at first
- People may not come if there’s no preset agenda
- For the organizers, it takes courage to let go of control and trust the group

Advantages

- Works with any size group larger than 10
- Simple design, easy to organize and facilitate
- Easy to participate
- Leaves responsibility in the hands of the group

For more information see www.openspaceworld.org
& Open Space Technology: A User’s Guide by Harrison Owen