

PRACTICAL WORKBOOK 01

Engagement that changes decisions

What can people still change about your project? How long do they have to have their say?

If you can't answer in a sentence, you're about to run an information session and call it consultation. Start with one real decision.

For the person who owns the decision

The engagement lead can open the conversation. Someone with authority must be willing to act on what comes back.

What it takes

Attention before the choice is locked, time to test alternatives and willingness to change the plan.

What it helps prevent

Promises your team cannot deliver, followed by rework or an explanation that arrives too late. This is a delivery question, not a communications task.

Start here

Take one decision through the next four pages: set the boundaries, map who decides, write the invitation and show what happened.

The project or decision I'm bringing to this

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Fixed is a claim. Test it.

Before asking for views, separate what is fixed, what is open and what still needs an answer.

Fixed

What cannot change? Record the reason and who verified it.

Open

What could change in a way affected people would notice?

Not yet confirmed

What needs checking, and who will check it?

Test the constraint: is it a requirement, a verified limit or a preference? “We would rather not” needs an honest label.

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Map the decision

Complete this with the person who can authorise a change. Agree the scope before inviting people to contribute.

The decision

What choice is still open? Use the boundaries on page 2.

The authority

Who decides? Who else must advise or approve?

The people

Who is affected or missing, including people whose rights or cultural authority need direct engagement?
How can they take part?

How input will be considered

What criteria will be used? How will options and differing views be weighed?

The dates

Input closes: _____ Decision: _____ Feedback by: _____

The follow-through

Who will explain the outcome and own the commitments?

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Make the invitation honest

What influence looks like

Fictional example: a temporary footpath diversion. Residents, traders and people with access needs identify a lost rest point and delivery problems on route A.

The delivery manager asks the team to test route B with better wayfinding and revised delivery access. The checks show it can work. Route B is chosen and the team explains what changed and what remains unresolved.

People were asked while the choice was open. The record shows what was heard, what was tested and why route B was chosen.

Use your map to write the invitation

"We are deciding _____. You can influence _____. _____ is outside this decision because _____. Contribute by _____, using _____. _____ will decide, considering _____. We will explain the outcome by _____."

Can someone outside the project explain what could change? If not, revise the invitation. If nothing is open, explain the decision honestly or seek authority to reopen it.

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Show what happened

Complete this after the decision. Keep disagreement and unresolved concerns visible.

What we heard

Include views that challenged the preferred approach.

What we tested and decided

What changed, what stayed the same and why?

What happens next

Unresolved issue or commitment / owner / due date / feedback date.

Which decision would we make differently if affected people told us something we had not understood?

Next: Workbook 02 · When the client holds the constraints.

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