

ARIZONA CIVIC TRAINING – ACT!

Appreciative Inquiry

A facilitated meeting process to discover past and current best practices that inform and inspire participants as they co-create and implement their ideal future.

Use to

- ❑ *Solicit full participation of all stakeholders in mission/vision development, strategic planning, organizational/system redesign, civic/community development, coordinate multiple change initiatives in a system*
- ❑ *Garner commitment to change as an ongoing process, not a one-time event*
- ❑ *Promote heart-felt inquiry, discovery and renewal*
- ❑ *Foster positive, grass-roots revolution*

Timing

- ❑ *AI Summit: large scale meeting of 5 – to 1000 or more that gets the whole “system” in the room, lasting from 1 – 6 days*
- ❑ *Non-conference Design: interviews and dialogue that spread renewed energy throughout the system with an indefinite timeframe*

Preparation

- ❑ *Review public participation plan objectives to determine if Appreciative Inquiry would contribute to achieving them*
- ❑ *Provide Appreciative Inquiry experience to project team members and decision makers; get agreement from all to follow the process and be open to outcomes*
- ❑ *Have project team develop the event theme or question, participate in design of discovery protocol, create and/or review all descriptions of the process and event notices, including advertisements, announcements, invitations, handouts*
- ❑ *Advertise the event with the theme or question*
- ❑ *Plan for all logistics, including seating arrangements, materials, equipment and refreshments*

Implementation

- ❑ *Ensure room set-up is complete at least 30 minutes before scheduled start time; test audio/visual equipment , computers and microphones (if applicable), hang signs*
- ❑ *The meeting convener briefly describes the purpose of and hopes for the meeting*
- ❑ *The meeting facilitator provides guidance and support throughout the event*

Documentation

- ❑ *From the Discovery Phase of Appreciative Inquiry, themes emerge which are posted in the room and included in the written summary of the event*
- ❑ *Possibility statements are generated in the Dream Phase of Appreciative Inquiry and are included in the written summary*
- ❑ *During the Design and Destiny Phase of Appreciative Inquiry, participants create reports on computers or in long hand on report forms (or on flip charts); these are distributed to participants before the end of the event and included in the written summary*
- ❑ *Sometimes digital photos are taken of Dream products and included in the written summary*
- ❑ *A written summary of the event can be included in the public participation plan, provided to stakeholders in regular scheduled communications (newsletters, project updates) and posted on the project's Web site*
- ❑ *Copies of the written summary can be provided to the public*

Hints

- Avoid using Appreciative Inquiry when
 - Decisions or outcomes are predetermined
 - Predictable, linear process and outcomes are required
 - Problem identification and problem solving is the preferred method for change
 - There is lack of support for passionate dreaming and inspired self-initiative

Debrief

- After the event, gather the project team together to determine
 - How well the event met the objectives
 - How they will follow up on Action Plans developed during the event (if not decided at the event)
 - Major learnings
 - Need for future sessions

Resources

- Staffing
 - Facilitator
 - 6 – 10 logistics people, depending on total group size
 - Computer input people (1 for each 25 participants)
- Equipment
 - One microphone (for large groups, generally over 50)
 - Optional Lap top computers, printers, digital camera and a copy machine
 - Easels and flip charts (1 for every 6 – 8 participants)
 - Overhead projector
 - Optional TV and video recorder; optional boom box
- Space and room set-up
 - A registration table at or just outside the entrance
 - Refreshment station on the one side of the room
 - Optional tables in a designated section of the room to accommodate computer equipment
 - Free-standing chairs arranged initially in groups of 6 – 8, later in one large or multiple concentric circles
- Budget
 - The largest expense is staff time, followed by cost of facility and food

Variations

- All phases have both necessary elements and flexibility with respect to approach

Attribution

- Appreciative Inquiry was originated by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva in 1987 with colleagues from Case Western University and Taos Institute

Contact BJ Peters at 602-279-4805 if you are interested in attending an Open Space Training and Practice Workshop on March 13 and 14, 2003.