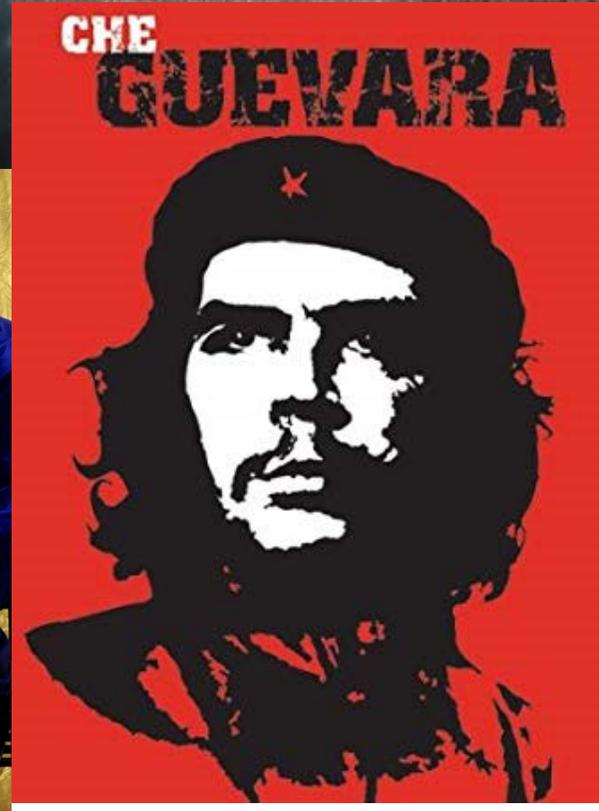


**TUNA BLUE**

Will Bessen

*What's one absolute gem of an idea that you've picked up over the last two days?*

# 6 Things



### **Honour those who showed up**

Sometimes in regional and remote engagement workshops or events don't turn out the way you'd hoped.

You can often get low numbers.

But give the five people that do turn up the same energy as you'd give 20. Smaller communities work differently, you never know who those five are, who they know or where they'll pop up in the future

*What can you do?*

Change your modality as a facilitator from standing up front to a more intimate sit down kitchen table style chat.

### **Roll the sleeves up**

More often than not - flash engagement methods, tools, hubs, surveys and fun workshops just won't get the traction.

You need to get out there (or on the phone), roll the sleeves up and hustle. Nothing beats a list of phone numbers, a car and can-do attitude.

*What can you do?*

Call people, ask if you can catch them for a face-to-face interview, chat or work together over the phone

### **Crammed in**

Beware 'engagement' as an afterthought. A common request for assistance we get is to work with an agenda that has 12 presentations in a row with 20 mins of 'workshop' or 'engagement' at the end. Ideally you advocate for more engagement time and get it, but often you're left working with what you get – shaving precious minutes of agenda slots of quarantine enough time for participants to make meaning of the information and discuss the 'so what'.

*What can you do?*

Work 5 minute 'key message' reflection sessions into the agenda after every 2—3 presentations. Allow people time to download together

### **The whole posse**

As an organisation, turning up with the whole posse can be really daunting, especially when you have 10 participants and 10 Agency or Council staff are there.

In engagement, just like everything else, everyone needs a role and purpose, not just hovering about or sitting at a separate table.

*What can you do?*

Go with 1-3 staff but if everyone must be involved, have them drop in for lunch

### **Rabbit holes**

This is a difficult one. The best officers or experts to work with, are the ones who know which rabbits to chase down which holes.

They're able to genuinely and respectfully communicate when something isn't up for influence or even discussion. But are also willing to consider new opportunities and initiatives.

It's not as simple as 'managing expectations' – it's about empathizing with them and seeking to meet them somehow. If you're engaging enough that people want to explore new options with you, take them up and convert them to true supporters

*What can you do?*

This is classic IAP2 spectrum stuff – know which parts of the process or business are open to more involvement etc.

### **Subvert the bureaucracy**

The best clients to work with are those who understand the need for process but work actively to reduce friction, cut the crap and make a difference.

*What can you do?*

Take a cue from the the Customer Experience / Design Thinking space that's huge at the moment. Empathise with your 'customers', pick a part of your process or business that might cause lots of 'friction' and actively seek to help them have a better 'experience'