



# ENGAGE CITIES: PR PLAN SUPPORT FAQ

A summary of the most Frequently Asked Questions  
during ENGAGE cities' conference calls  
with Futerra Sustainability Communications.

Date of preparation	09.02.2011
Author	Futerra Sustainability Ltd
Grant Agreement number	IEE/09/774/SI2.558357



**ENGAGE** for energy & climate,  
make the difference for Europe!

[www.citiesengage.eu](http://www.citiesengage.eu)



## WHAT IS IN THIS DOCUMENT?

During the last few months, Futerra has been speaking to individual ENGAGE cities about their PR campaign plans. This document provides a summary of the questions that have come up most frequently and answers those queries. It also includes examples of some of the creative ideas that many of the ENGAGE cities are planning to include in their campaigns.

Just for fun, the Futerra team has marked our favourite PR ideas with a:



This is intended as a resource for all cities to use throughout ENGAGE and to help those who may still be looking for inspiration for further ideas to help finalise their campaign plans.



# 1. WHO SHOULD FEATURE IN OUR FIRST SET OF POSTERS?

It is recommended that as well as inviting city officials (such as the Mayor) to feature in your first posters, you should also invite influential figures from other areas of society at this early stage too. These could be CEOs of local businesses, directors of charities, heads of architects associations or celebrity musicians or sportsmen/women.

The rationale for this is to ensure that as many target audience groups are influenced from the outset of the campaign. If your group of 'key opinion former' poster stars are the leaders of public sector, private sector and consumer society, then the campaign is more likely to resonate with a wider audience.

If your first posters feature only public sector leaders, then they are only likely to influence public sector workers. If your first posters feature a local celebrity who is known by everyone, it will be widely talked about by all audiences!

One city is inviting 5-10 local personalities to be key poster stars, such as local famous writers, actors, sportspeople, artists etc



## 2. WHAT DO GOOD PR TACTICS LOOK LIKE?

PR tactics can be anything from developing innovative media story angles to getting celebrity involvement to creating an impactful stunt.

Some ENGAGE cities have already come up with some great PR ideas:

- Creating a giant ENGAGE poster to display on the town hall
- Running a 'teaser campaign' by displaying 'faceless' posters around the city prior to the official launch; to raise people's curiosity and start them talking about it 
- Create a 'Do-It-Yourself' Climate Party toolkit with games, videos and questions, which citizens can buy or download and use in their own homes and invite their friends to; this has a grassroots effect, enabling events to happen independently. 
- Running a Climate Idols competition and promoting through all media channels; who will be this year's city Climate Idol; use local leadership figures as judges 
- Call to action:
  - o asking citizens to sign a petition in support of the Covenant of Mayors target
  - o asking them to come up with ideas of how to participate
- Set a goal of number of testimonials/pledges to spur engagement, e.g. 2,000
- Create a live online pledge-tracker showing the number of pledges/testimonials that are made as they sign up; a thermometer shows the target number being reached 
- Free cycling lessons and bike locks are being offered by one city
- Heidelberg's ice block stunt and Norway's cross-country celebrity bicycle challenge resulted in very successful PR

Please find further information on PR tactics in the [PR Campaign Guidelines](#).



### 3. HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR EVENTS AS INTERESTING AND ENGAGING AS POSSIBLE?

At the same time as providing educational and practical information at events about saving energy, it is also a good idea to include diversity with some fun, interactive activities. Consider including elements that will appeal to different age groups and for environmentalists as well as non-environmentally conscious audiences.

This could be anything from entertainment (theatre, live music), serving organic food and green-coloured cocktails to demonstrating electric cars. As well as your official photographer and outdoor photo studio area for taking poster photos, complete with hair & make-up artist, maybe try an additional photo booth where citizens can have their instant photo taken with their friends against a fun backdrop. The digital photos could be uploaded online.

Here are some great ideas from other ENGAGE cities:

- Hosting workshops for kids showing them how to make solar collectors by hand 
- 'Piggyback' existing city events; set up an ENGAGE photo booth at another event that is already planned to run in your city. This means less work for your team as the event will be promoted by other people and your stand will benefit from footfall of a diverse audience.
- Organise a visual public balloon launch to symbolise the number of pledges made
- Creating an extra long scroll with all the names of stakeholders and citizens who've signed the petition   




## 4. HOW CAN WE EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE OPINION FORMERS AND PRESS?

Forging media partnerships with the local press at the start of the campaign is a good way of ensuring positive ongoing press coverage throughout the campaign. They will expect interviews with key campaign spokespeople and participants in return – as well as invitations to all events.

Set up one-to-one briefings with key journalists at the start of the campaign so they feel that they are the first to hear about it. Keep them informed.

Several cities are sending personal letters inviting influencers to participate in the poster campaigns. Others are inviting local businesses to partner with the campaign and are offering them grants towards energy efficiency measures as well as free training and consultancy.

If you are hosting a public event, offer an element of exclusivity for key influencers. This could be an exclusive drinks reception the evening before to give them a preview of the campaign. Or create a VIP enclosure at a function where they can network with other 'important' guests.



## 5. HOW CAN WE KEEP TRACK OF PARTICIPANTS' PROGRESS? HOW DO WE GIVE FEEDBACK? HOW CAN WE MEASURE THEIR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE?

It is important to find out the views of participants both at the start and at the end of the campaign towards environmental behaviours so you can see if there has been any change in their opinions. This can be done using an online survey (we recommend [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), which is free) or using a paper questionnaire, which could be handed out at an event when they sign up to participate. Participants would need to be asked the same kinds of questions so that the first and last surveys could be compared.

When participants sign up to be poster stars, it is a good idea to ask them for their email addresses and contact details so that you can send them regular updates throughout the campaign and ask how they are getting on and offer any support.

Here are some ideas from other ENGAGE cities:

- Email participants regular e-newsletters with updates
- Offer each participant a dedicated mentor and adviser
- Organise a weekly Question & Answer slot on the local radio station with an expert, where citizens can ring in and publicly ask questions
- Host public carbon calculators online for all to see (for participants who agree to this); this creates a competitive element and is strong social proof



## 6. HOW COULD WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA EFFECTIVELY?

For cities that are able to use social media, the key channels that are recommended are:

- Your own website: creating a forum space where participants can have dialogue and where you can respond to their questions. A regular blog is a good idea.
- A Twitter feed: to update participants on the progress of the campaign and include opinion-led comments for general interest
- Facebook: a good place to upload photos related to the campaign, such as photos from events or even the poster images with faces of the poster stars. Here they can also share views on the campaign
- Youtube: to upload any videos relating to the campaign onto, such as a poster star talking about their pledge or the Mayor announcing the launch of an event
- Flickr: to upload any interesting photos from events etc.

One city is going to be interviewing students about their pledges and posting the videos of these interviews online.



The best social media campaigns are the ones that are integrated across several of these channels, so that diverse audiences are reached.

When uploading photos or videos, ensure that they are well captioned with keywords, such as 'Pamplona, festival, green, energy' so that other people will become aware of the campaign when they do internet searches.

The website [www.mashable.com](http://www.mashable.com) provides lots of guidance on social media and how to use it effectively.



## 7. HOW MANY POSTERS SHOULD BE PRINTED?

There is no set figure - this is up to each city to decide. Quality rather than quantity is the key factor.

- The more influential people that are featured in the posters, the better.
- The more posters placed in strategic and diverse locations, the better.

## 8. HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE WITH DIFFERENT TARGET AUDIENCE GROUPS?

If you create a message grid by drawing up a list of key messages to target each different audience group before the start of the campaign, this will help inform your subsequent communications. Please find further information on the [PR Campaign Guidelines](#) pg 46.

