

Social Innovation Camp training workshop

10-4pm, Tuesday 26th January 2010

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Social Innovation Camp: About us

Social Innovation Camp is an experiment in creating social innovations for the digital age.

We think the online world holds huge potential to change some pretty fundamental things in the offline world: how people hold those in positions of power accountable; who they rely on to provide the services they need to live healthy, happy lives; or how they make a difference to something that affects them.

But for any of this to happen, we have to work out what people really need and start building the technology that can help – which is what Social Innovation Camp is all about.

We bring together ideas, people and digital tools to build web-based solutions to social problems – from creating some software to working out how you'd sustain an idea - all in just 48 hours.

Here's how it works:

1. Send us your idea for a web-based tool to change something important. You might be a software developer, designer, nurse, teacher, doctor, lawyer, student.... anyone who's got an idea for how to make something better using the web.
2. We choose six of the best to come to the Social Innovation Camp weekend and invite people to help.
3. You have 48 hours to build a team and make an idea real: from creating the software and working out how you'd get people to use it, to thinking about how you'd sustain it.
4. At the end, teams have to show and tell their prototype and we'll give away a prize to the idea that's shown most potential.

Founded in late 2007, we're a very small team based in Bethnal Green, East London. We've run three competitions and weekends, had over 300 ideas submitted and helped build 20 prototypes.

You can read all about our past events on our website at <http://www.sicamp.org>

Purpose and aims for the Social Innovation Camp training day

Social Innovation Camp might be focused on technology, but what we're really interested in is helping people make change for themselves.

We believe that great ideas for real change come from ordinary people who've seen something they think could be better or who have a problem they'd like to solve.

The Dignity in Care Campaign is all about that too: mobilizing people to make care better.

The purpose of the Social Innovation Camp training workshop is to share some of the tricks we've learnt about how you bring together people, inspire them to come up with ideas to do things differently and help them work out how to make those ideas real.

The aim is that you'll be able to use our tools to inspire the people you're working with too.

To help you, we're going to be teaching you how to run your own ideas workshop based on the Social Innovation Camp model.

The idea is that you'll leave the training day able to run ideas workshops with Dignity Champions to inspire them, get them talking and working out how they might make new ideas for improving care happen.

Agenda

10-10.30am

Introduction to the day and background to Social Innovation Camp

We'll be kicking off with a brief introduction to Social Innovation Camp and setting the scene for the rest of the day.

The morning will give you an overview of the Social Innovation Camp methodology and some practical experience of an ideas generating workshop. In the afternoon we'll run you through some key 'how tos' that will help you design and run your own.

10.30am-12pm

Social Innovation Camp Express

Next up, we'll be running a Social Innovation Camp Express as an example of the sort of ideas workshop you can run with Dignity Champions in your local area.

12-1pm - LUNCH

1-1.45pm

How to recruit your participants

Running a great workshop is all about getting brilliant people to come along. And you can't just wait for them to find you – you've got to put some effort into finding them. We'll be talking you through how to do just that and recruit some eager participants for your ideas generation workshop.

1.45-2.30pm

How to set the scene

Once you've gathered together your participants, you'll need to explain what you want them to do. There are a couple of tricks for getting this right and setting the scene for a really creative, collaborative and productive workshop.

2.30-2.45pm - BREAK

2.45-3.30pm

How to spot a great idea

As the facilitator of an ideas generation workshop, it'll be your job to spot and help shape great ideas. We've got some pointers for working out what a really great idea with potential looks like.

3.30-4pm

Round up, questions and home time.

They'll be a chance to ask questions and share your thoughts at the end of the day, but you can always come and have a chat with the Social Innovation Camp team after the event. Just email katherine@sicamp.org or anna@sicamp.org

The practical bit: How to run your own workshop

At the end of the Social Innovation Camp training day, you should have lots of handy hints and tips for how to run your own ideas workshop similar to our Social Innovation Camp Express.

There's a lot to take in, so you'll find all the details of what we do, when at a Social Innovation Camp Express workshop below for you to design and run your own ideas workshop.

We've run this in just 50 minutes and in two and a half hours; we've tried it out on 15 people in a pub, as well as with over 100 members of a local council – it seems to work every time! We do seem to find that 25-35 participants is the most manageable number however, so we'd suggest you aim for a similar number for your own idea workshop.

The timings here are all based on a two-hour-long session but you can adapt them depending on how long you've got, where you're holding it and who your participants are.

Here's how it works:

1.) Introduce yourselves

Start off by introducing yourselves: give a brief outline of the workshop format and the purpose of the event.

2.) Get people talking

Next explain that an ideas workshop is all about bringing different people together and getting them to come up with ideas that they're passionate about. So the first thing you'll need to do to make it work is to help everyone to get to know each other a little better.

To do this, we use a sticker game as an ice-breaker. Hand round some big sticky labels and pens. Then ask your participants to go and speak to someone they've not met before and ask what makes them tick: what's their passion? What's their day-job? Why are they at the workshop? What are they interested in? Every time a participant finds out something new, they write it on a label and stick it to the person they've been talking to. Give them ten minutes and by the end all your participants should be labelled up with things they're interested in or the skills they have.

We like to make some labels with suggested words on beforehand too.

3.) What do you want to fix?

Next, hand around some post-it notes and ask your participants to – either in small groups or on their own – think of a problem they'd like to solve. We use a little metaphor to help explain this bit that always gets people laughing: it's said that all good ideas come from having 'an itch to scratch' – something that really bothers you that you just have to do something about. It could be something in your personal or professional life; something you've just read about or something you've experienced directly. Ask your participants to write down as many itches as they can think of – but each itch has to fit in two lines on a post-it note.

There are three suggestions we always offer to help think of good itches:

- Firstly, give a couple of examples of the kind of ideas you think are exciting – this helps people understand what you're talking about.

- Secondly, suggest that the problems they are thinking up shouldn't be too big. So 'how do I tackle fear of change in the care sector?' isn't specific enough: big change starts small, so what's the one thing you'd change to make this happen? Keeping your itches manageable

works best.

- And finally, try to think of a problem that's on its way to being a solution. Don't just identify something that needs fixing: be specific about what the problem is and begin to suggest what a solution might be. So the idea shouldn't just be: 'Information sharing between care staff and doctors and nurses is poor' – you need to go one step further: 'Doctors and nurses don't share information so we need an easy way of recording conversations with patients that's confidential and personal – perhaps using simple technology.'

As your participants are busy writing, start gathering up their ideas and stick them on a wall or board. Try to group them according to similar themes – this will help you sort through them later.

Give your participants 15 minutes to do this.

4.) Choose your ideas

Depending on the number of people in your group, choose between three and six of the best ideas that your participants have come up with. Try to think about what you think makes a great idea when you make your decision, but you shouldn't spend more than a few minutes thinking about it.

5.) Split into groups

Gather your participants together and read out your selected ideas. Give each idea a different corner of a room or allocate it a group of chairs. Then explain that if participants are interested in talking about a particular idea, they should go and sit in the corresponding space.

6.) Making it real

Once everyone's decided on their idea, explain that they have 30-40 minutes to work out in their groups how they would make their ideas real. To help your participants do this, give them four things to think about:

1. Make sure you understand the problem you're trying to solve.
2. How would your idea work in practice? Have a think about where you'd start to test your idea first. What would you need to do it and who would be involved?
3. How will you sustain your idea?
4. How will you get people to use your idea? Remember to give it a good name!

7.) Show and Tell

Once the teams have had their allotted time, ask each team to nominate a spokesperson for the group. Give each spokesperson five minutes to pitch their idea. Some people will be quite comfortable explaining their idea off-the-cuff; others will need you to ask your four questions in turn to help them explain their thinking.

8.) Document your workshop

We like to record all the ideas we come up with at a Social Innovation Camp Express workshop. We do this by blogging about them in quite a bit of detail, as well as taking photographs of all the ideas post-its.

You can see what's happened at some of our previous Social Innovation Camp Express workshops here: <http://express.sicamp.org/>

And you can see our photographs here:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/25422151@N04/>

9.) Encourage participants to enter their ideas into BIG!

So what happens to the ideas your participants have come up with?

The next step is to get your ideas entered into the Dignity in Care Campaign's innovation fund. Through the Bright Ideas Grant, (BIG), anyone can pitch for a chunk of £50,000.

BIG are looking for very early stage ideas: a basic concept for something new that's not been tried and tested – exactly the kind of thing an ideas workshop could come up with. Ideas should be all about ensuring a person's experience of care services is a good one and that they feel they are able to retain their personal dignity and self respect.

Anyone can apply for BIG either as an individual or an organisation. You just need to have seen something related to dignity in care that you want change or make better and have an idea for how to do that.

To enter, you have to answer a set of questions that explain your idea and upload it on to the BIG website. You can ask for up to £10,000 for one idea. Once you've posted an idea online, it's up to the public to vote for the best. BIG will award funding to a total value of £50K to those projects with most votes at 12 noon 18th March.

Should your idea win, you'll be expected to spent it testing your idea out in your local area and recording your progress through the Dignity in Care website.

You can find all details about how to enter here: <http://www.big.dh.gov.uk/>

Some tips for making your workshop really good

Now you know the basics, we've got a few pointers for how to make your workshop really good.

It's your job as the facilitator to lead your participants through each stage and getting that right is more of an art than an exact science. Here are some ideas you might find useful:

How to get people to join in

Running a great workshop is all about getting brilliant people to come along. And you can't just wait for them to find you – you've got to put some effort into finding them!

Here are some things to think about:

1.) Become a talent scout

You're not necessarily just looking to get anyone and everyone involved. This isn't about gathering together an audience; you're looking for a group of people to work together. You're looking for people with passion, talent and knowledge who are going to get the most out of coming to your workshop and come up with some great ideas with your guidance.

So before we run a Social Innovation Camp Express, we have a good think about the types of people we'll need there.

Firstly, what are the incentives for people to join in? We look for people who are passionate about making a service better: it might be that they're frustrated with the way things work at the moment or that they're inspired by how they think things could be different in the future. Either way, they have a shared commitment to making things better and an ideas workshop can provide a platform for that passion. The event is also a chance for people to be creative and that's not something everyone gets to do often in their daily lives – another powerful incentive for your participants.

The second thing we look out for in people to invite along is a certain set of skills. We're looking for people who are doers – not just thinkers: people who can think practically and take something from theory to reality. We're also after people who aren't afraid to just try something out. They don't need to be huge risk-takers, but the willingness to experiment is really important.

Finally, we're looking for people with different sets of knowledge and experience. When we run a Social Innovation Camp, we're trying to bring together those with the knowledge of how to build or design something (software, product and service designers), with business and marketing mentors with people who have direct experience of a particular service. For your ideas workshop, you might want to bring together someone who works in a care home, a nurse, doctor, someone caring for a friend or family member. But you don't just have to invite people who work in the care sector – experiment with inviting others in as well! What about someone you know with a background in business, marketing or sales?

Once we've got a rough idea of who we're targeting, we use a combination of direct mail, word-of-mouth advertising and social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) to reach the people we want to come.

2.) Be a connector

Great ideas come from bringing together people who think differently. So try and invite participants who wouldn't normally meet. That might be about inviting along those who work outside of a care setting completely, but it might also be about bringing together people from

different parts of a work place: a manager with front line staff; a patient with a carer. Think about the skills, experiences and perspectives that might bring something different to the table.

3.) Be human

Once you've worked out who you'd like to be there, you've got to find a way of explaining your workshop to them in an appealing way.

Give your event a name, a one-line way of explaining it (try to describe it in less than 30 words!) and a short blurb about why people should get involved that will form the basis of your invitation to participants.

The trick here is that you're not necessarily looking for the people who are in charge or who have been told they should be 'innovating'. Again, if you can tap into someone's drive to do something differently, that's a much stronger incentive to get involved. Avoid jargon or acronyms – just talk in plain English. Appeal to their passion, interest and frustrations rather than their job titles or what they do at work.

As an example here's our one-liner and blurb for the Social Innovation Camp Express:

"The Social Innovation Camp Express is a workshop that's all about how the online world can change the offline one.

It's an informal workshop giving you an opportunity to learn a little bit about how the Web can help people change stuff for themselves, share some really practical ideas and meet some nice new people. And it's meant to be fun too!"

4.) Don't give too much away

Curiosity is a great hook for getting people involved. We've found that you don't need to give participants every single little detail about what you're going to ask of them at your ideas workshop. Give them just enough information to make it sound interesting and different. The less they know, the more open they'll be to thinking differently.

How to set the scene

Once you've gathered together your participants, you'll need to explain what you want them to do.

This bit is all about the language you use to communicate what you want people to do and how you set the tone for the event – it's not just how you write about your workshop, it's also how you act and talk as the facilitator. There are a couple of tricks for getting this right and setting the scene for a really creative, collaborative and productive workshop.

1.) Make it really easy for people to talk to each other

We've all been to events where we've experienced that awkward first introduction to people we've never met before – whether it's a party or a work conference. To think creatively, people have to feel comfortable about contributing to a discussion. And to help them do that, you've got to get them over that first awkward interaction.

We use our sticker game to help break the ice by making it part of the expectation for the event that participants can simply walk up to someone and start talking about what makes them tick. And it helps to create a level playing field – whether you work at the top of an organization or you're front line staff, you've all got something to contribute. It also helps that everyone looks a little bit silly!

2.) Be inspirational

When you're looking for ideas, it's tempting to set criteria to explain the kind of thing you're looking for: it's got to be something that provides respite for young carers, it has to deliver more for less, it has to engage with existing service providers and so forth.

We've found that the problem with this is that participants tell you what they think you want to hear, rather than coming up with something you'd never have thought of on your own. If you really believe that the people in the room are the ones who have all the know-how and experience to come up with something truly game-changing, it's much better to inspire them, than give them tight instructions. The best way of doing this is to give them really concrete examples of ideas you think are great and talk about what you like about them.

You'll have the opportunity to shape ideas later on in your workshop – and we'll come to that in the next section of this guide.

3.) Make it fun

Ideas that are truly system changing can sometimes sound a little mad to begin with. To run a really creative workshop, you should be aiming to make it somewhere people feel comfortable about making bold suggestions and don't feel afraid to experiment. So make it fun, positive and encourage a little mad thinking along the way. Instead of giving reasons why something might not work, look for reasons why it might just change everything.

How to spot a great idea

As the facilitator of an ideas workshop, it'll be your job to spot and help shape great ideas. There are few hard and fast rules for this, but we've got some pointers for what a really great idea with potential looks like.

Problems and ideas come in many different shapes and sizes. Some are so huge they need the weight of big organizations, companies and even government behind them; some need new technologies to make them work. At the other end of the scale, some are just improvements or small incremental changes to provide temporary fixes to something that's broken.

Not all problems or ideas are going to be suitable for the workshops you'll be running. The key is to work out what kind of ideas you might be able to practically make real.

So what *should* you be looking for in a good idea?

1. Start from the grassroots. We're used to our public services being designed and delivered by professionals and specialists from the top down. That's being challenged now and we're beginning to ask how we can get citizens involved in providing services to one another. Many of the ideas you're going to be coming up with will probably involve this too: bringing together groups of individuals to do things for themselves. And they probably won't need much equipment or resources beyond a person's time to begin with.
2. Use your imagination and shape an idea. Don't expect ideas at the post-it note stage to be very well-formed. Part of your role as a facilitator is to help shape an idea. Don't just take what's been written down at face value. You might need to ask the person who's come up with an idea for extra details or you might be have to explain what you think is exciting about it or how you think it could develop.
3. Think about sustainability and scale. When you choose your ideas, you've got to be realistic. It would be lovely for the public sector to have unlimited resources, but the world doesn't work like that. Think about how an idea could be sustained: who would pay for it and how? And is an idea specific to one place or can it be repeated elsewhere? An idea might be a campaign, a company, a money-saving toolkit or one-off innovation to change the way a service works paid for from an existing budget.

4. Having said that, this is a place to take a risk and think outside the box. Choose something you don't know the answer to!

So what kind of problems or ideas aren't right for this? Some things to look out for might be:

- A problem or idea that's really about something that's organized centrally which is just too big for you to have control over. The main things here will probably be funding, allocation of budget or anything that touches on legal issues.
- A really generalized, broad problem that has lots of different contributing factors. For example, the need for greater equality of care or staff morale. Where's the specific place you could have impact?
- Some things appear to be problems when in fact they're symptoms of something else. Watch out for these ones and keep asking if you've hit the real issue or not. Is staff morale really the problem? Or is the problem actually that staff are under-valued and under-paid?

The more you spend time thinking about what ideas might work and what won't the easier this will become!

So that's all from us.

We hope you've found this guide useful, interesting and maybe even a little inspirational.

We've tried to give you lots of practical hints and tips but now it's up to you to take the best bits and run your own ideas workshops.

Best of luck!

Anna and Katherine

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