POSSIBLE INTERACTIVE/INNOVATIVE FORMATS

1. Campfire
Campfire Sessions begin a lot like a traditional presentation, with a speaker (or multiple speakers) at the front of the room presenting an idea to a group of people. After 15 or 20 minutes, however, the focus shifts from the presenter to the audience. For the remainder of the session, the presenter becomes a facilitator, inviting comments, insights and questions from those around the room. Campfire sessions allow attendees to drive their own learning and share experiences with others, which also assists with networking.

2. Human Spectrogram
Despite the fancy name, this format essentially involves voting with your feet. The presenter asks the group a small number of key questions (usually no more than 3 or 4 as participants might get tired!) and individuals move to an area of the room to indicate their answer.

3. The Solution Room
Typically lasting between 90-120 minutes and able to handle hundreds of participants, The Solution Room is designed to provide peer-supported advice on individuals’ most pressing problems. Each participant is given time to think of a challenge they are facing. A human spectrogram can be carried out to demonstrate how difficult people feel their challenges are to overcome. Another can be done to show the years of experience participants in the room have to offer each other. Participants are then divided into groups of 6-8 and each person takes it in turns to present their problem and have it brainstormed by the group in 7-minute cycles. Groups share round tables with paper cloths that they can write on. A final spectrogram maps the shift in the way participants now feel about their respective challenges.

4. World Café
The World Café format is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. The process begins with the first of two or more rounds of discussion for groups of 4-6 seated around a table. Each round is prefaced with a question. At the end of each 15-20-minute round, each member of the group moves to a different table. They may or may not choose to leave one person as the “table host” for the next round, who welcomes the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round. Once all rounds have been completed, key points from each table are presented to the whole group for a final collective discussion.

5. Fishbowls
Fishbowls help facilitate discussion in large groups by having just 3-6 people talk at any one time. Those individuals are seated in the centre of the room while the while the rest of the participants (maximum of 50 people) sit around the outside and observe without interrupting. Although largely self-organising once the discussion gets underway, the fishbowl process usually has a facilitator or moderator.

6. Soapbox
Including a soapbox at your event can provide delegates with a platform to have their ideas heard. Individuals can submit proposals to participate and, if they are chosen, will be given a short time on stage to present an issue that is important to them. Challenging views are encouraged, as well as the sharing of any projects or pieces of research likely to be of interest to the audience.

7. Hyde Park Corner Debate
This format takes a central theme or question and has two speakers debate for and against. At the outset, the participants are polled to measure their opinion on the topic. Following the debate, they are polled again to see how many are now in favor or against. The winner of the debate is the speaker who caused the most audience members to change their votes.

8. Speakers’ Quiz
Inject some fun into proceedings by quizzing teams of speakers, Family Fortunes-style, to see how well they understand the audience. The quiz is prefaced by an audience poll where they vote on answers to a selection of questions. Next, the speakers are asked to guess the top answers e.g. “What do delegates think is the biggest challenge facing the ABC industry right now?” Whether they get it right or wrong, it’s a novel way to deliver the results of the poll to the delegates.

9. Personal Introspective
Personal introspective is a session where attendees privately reflect on their answers to five questions. All attendees write their answers down. They then have an opportunity, but not an obligation, to share their answers with the group. It is a useful format to use towards the end of the event to help reinforce learning and solidify commitments to make changes based on their experiences at the event.

10. Storytelling
Storytelling sessions invite speakers to tell stories that help illustrate or enhance themes in the conference tracks. They should reflect the authentic experience of an individual, a team, or a community, but be told like a traditional story. The narrative should contain a beginning, middle and end, characters and themes that hold interest, like adversity and triumph.

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