

## Presenting Data at Meetings

When designing a meeting, we've got to ask ourselves how data might help to prepare people for the work at hand, inform the process, or help "ground" the conversation in reality.

In terms of the Diamond of Participatory Decision-Making (Kaner), data can be super useful at any stage:

- To lay out the current situation;
- To stimulate divergent ideas;
- To grapple with different views;
- To pose solutions or forecast the effect of a particular decision.

For example, managers often are privy to data about their organization that frontline staff don't get to see. Meetings can be a prime opportunity to:

- Present relevant organizational or project data to staff;
- Invite staff to interpret the data and name implications of it.

So, in Washington, D.C., we made sure that frontline staff of workforce development programs actively used data during their meetings. Here's just a sample of the data we made available – and what a difference it made!

- Data (i.e. their orientation, participation, placement, and retention rates), organized in a way that makes sense from their vantage point.
- Key metrics, with unlabelled comparisons to other organizations and to the city as a whole.

Staff saw the same set of data in periodic meetings. This allowed them to track progress over time, and to agree on new goals for themselves. We presented data in graphic form, continually experimenting with the innovative use of bars, pies, and other techniques to make the data most meaningful to the staff.

Figuring out what data to present, and in what visual form, is a key part of pre-meeting work.

- *What will be achieved at your meeting?*
- *What data might be of interest – and of use – in order for this to be achieved?*

Achievements:	<i>Data that will be useful</i>