

Guidelines

How to launch a local event on Diversity in your own country

In most companies, it is a fact that diversity issues are mainly dealt with by Human Resource (HR) managers only. In order to encourage **operational managers** to mainstream diversity within the company, the members of the CSR Europe “Mainstreaming Diversity” Lab decided to design an innovative **local multi company event** focusing on a relevant diversity issue, specific to the country where the event will take place.

I. The “Double Principles” of the event:

1. Double objectives:

- **Production of concrete outputs** (sharing of best practices and first experiences underway, co building of new solutions)
- **Networking** (between companies, and between companies and relevant local NPOs)

2. Double benefits:

- **No budget needed** (event hosted in one volunteer company, organised with a small group of motivated companies and NPOs, and meeting on a regular basis)
- **Easy to duplicate in another country** (half-day format, mixing plenary sessions, work in sub-groups and a short final restitution)

3. Double aspects of the meeting:

- **General presentations** given by relevant diversity experts to introduce the topic (academics, experts, practitioners...)
- **Interactive workshops** (mixing HR people, CSR people and managers in charge of HR activities, - i.e. industrial, marketing, sales... - who are facing diversity issues. Workshops are co-run by an expert and a facilitator; and a followed by a short plenary restitution)

II. The pilot event

This event took place in **Brussels during the afternoon of November 17th**. (See program enclosed). In this experience, the steering committee (several companies and the local NPOs Business & Society and SeniorFlex) chose to address corporate current expectations by tackling the issue of **age diversity in the workplace**. The event was thus entitled “*Senior talents for competitive companies*” or “*how to manage properly our senior resources for a better performance*”.

Twelve companies participated in this event, including lab members. In total, 60 participants with varied functions (practitioners, marketing, customers services, HR managers) had an interactive discussion on age management.

III. The 6 conditions of success

1. Be relevant and collegial!

The diversity topic chosen has to be collectively agreed upon, and has to concretely address companies' expectations

2. Preparation is key!

For this event in November, preparation meant 5 meetings of 3 hours from April to October

3. Set up concrete expectations!

Preparation must be led in the spirit of benefiting to all members from the beginning (as a learning expedition) and of setting up a concrete network

4. The choice of relevant speakers is crucial!

For this event, the speakers were two academics: the Dutch speaker Hilda Martens fromUniversity and the French speaker Annie Cornet from... University)

5. Gather adequate material beforehand!

Don't forget to plan specific supports for work in sub-groups (i.e. templates, outputs posters...)

6. Welcoming is all!

Do not forget to ensure good quality of the welcoming conditions, such as badges, posters, programmes, coffee...