



# 15 questions you should ask when commissioning engagement or consultation support

Your stakeholder engagement and/or consultation activity must not only establish relationships, but maintain them. High quality engagement and consultation strategies and practices will not only improve your reputation (with both your supporters and critics), but it will help you to avoid legal challenges and unnecessary and expensive delays.

Here are our top 15 questions to ask to ensure you are choosing the right supplier or support resource:

- ? Do you have the required resources (staff, skills and knowledge) internally, or do you have to outsource this work? Can you risk assigning this to your sales/marketing team?
- ? Ask what experience the supplier has in delivering engagement/consultation projects. They should be happy to provide examples/testimonials/references from previous similar work
- ? Make sure you are clear on who is responsible for which tasks
- ? How much time is required to deliver the tasks/phases, and your project as a whole?
- ? Ask what their approach and strategy would be. Every project is different and the strategy should reflect the specific challenges and opportunities yours presents
- ? Ask how they plan to deal with any objection campaigns
- ? Stakeholder engagement and consultation is a fluid process; find out how often they propose to provide updates and meet to discuss the project as it is delivered
- ? The media can be a key informer and influencer; what is their approach with the news outlets?
- ? How do they envisage your engagement and consultation accepting feedback and comment?
- ? Who will deal with received feedback and comment, and how is that managed and monitored?
- ? What happens with complaints or issues raised?
- ? Are they setting your project within a wider context? Do they have a global picture?
- ? Is your person/team/company familiar or an expert in your industry? Is being 'familiar' going to be enough or would an expert on your side stand you in better stead?
- ? Be clear about your project outputs and deadlines - and make sure they are achievable with your chosen supplier.
- ? Your supplier needs to meet you in person (especially if they are new to you) to understand the project and meet the wider team. How often would this happen?

Once you are satisfied with the answers to the above questions you can put your trust in the stakeholder engagement/consultation supplier to deliver a high-quality and considered strategy which responds to your project.