

Prioritisation Matrix

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Easy
Cost	Low (up to \$1,000)
When might you use it	To develop an Action Plan To discover community issues To develop community capacity To build alliances, consensus
Number of people required to help to organise	One -three people
Time to organise	Short (Up to six weeks)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30), Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Artists/photographer; Audiovisual recording equipment and Amplification; Overhead/Data projectors and screen; Printed public information sheets; Response sheets; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Furniture; Children's requirements
Innovation level	Medium to High

Description

A prioritisation matrix is a technique used to achieve consensus within a specific group of participants about an issue. The matrix helps rank problems or issues (usually generated through brainstorming or other techniques) by a particular criterion that is important to the project, as defined by the participants. This allows participants to clearly see which issues are the most important to work on solving first. Prioritisation matrices are used to determine what participants consider to be the most pressing issues. A prioritisation matrix can use whatever resources are available to create a table of issues and boxes for participants to cast their 'votes'. Tools can include whiteboards, computer databases, or twigs and stones in a field trip setting. The important thing is to list all the issues, to determine the frequency with which problems arise in relation to an issue, the importance the people give to this, and to count the votes to determine what is seen by the majority of people as a priority.

Objective

- To identify and prioritise the important issues for a community

Desired Outcome

- A prioritisation matrix of issues identified by a community

Uses/Strengths

- Can assist in defining the most important issues in participation projects with many issues.
- Provides a democratic and transparent device for determining priorities.
- Can provide a focus for action

Special Considerations/Weaknesses

- Setting up criteria can be problematic, if the brainstorming process raises a large number of issues.
- Some issues may not be considered because they are not raised by participants.

Step by Step Guide

1. Conduct a brainstorming session on issues that participants wish to explore in relation to a proposal, plan or community service (See the Brainstorming tool to learn how to conduct group brainstorming).
2. Fill out the prioritisation matrix chart with the group: issue/frequency/importance/feasibility/total points
3. In the first column, write down the issues that were mentioned in the brainstorming session.
4. In the second to fourth columns, define your criteria. Examples of some typical criteria are:
 - Frequency: how frequently does/will this issue affect the participants? Does it occur often or only on rare occasions?
 - Importance: from the point of view of the users, what are the most important issue? Add the issues that the organising agency or group wants to address?
 - Feasibility: how realistic is it that you can find a way to address this issue? Will it be easy or difficult? You can choose other criteria if they better fit the situation you are discussing (e.g. cost, environmental impact [high to low], number of affected persons can act as criteria). For a more quantitative comparison, you could use cost, amount of time, or other numerical indicators. It is also possible to use number values for each criteria and provide a rank out of 10 for each criteria. Collating total numbers for all criteria against issue can indicate the issues of highest priority.
5. Rank/Vote: Each participant now votes once in each of the boxes. Total all the votes together. The totals help you see clearly how to identify the priorities.