A Powerful new voice for older people In Northern Ireland

Case Study

Challenge

To engage with 600 older people across Northern Ireland while launching the new Age NI brand.

Solution

TurningPoint handsets at 13 launch events.

Benefits

- A voice for all
- Instant results
- Easy access to data
- Massive time savings

"TurningPoint worked without fuss…and gave everyone speed and clarity."

Maura McClean
Project Manager
Age NI

With over 60 years of shared history to draw on, Age Concern NI and Help the Aged in Northern Ireland joined together in April 2009 to create a powerful new voice for older people

The mission: to enhance and improve the lives of older people.

The vision: to create a world where older people flourish.

The two legacy charities cared for many, campaigned for change, and created vital products and services. In the last year, with the support of partners and stakeholders, they made a positive impact on 158,000 older people. If those experiences made one thing clear, it's that there is strength in numbers which is why Age Concern NI and Help the Aged in Northern Ireland became one – Age NI.

Age NI launch events

Age NI coordinated a series of 13 events to launch the new Age NI brand and engage with older people on key age sector issues. Maura McClean, Project Manager at Age NI coordinated the engagement element, using TurningPoint for the first time in the charity's history. The first launch event was held in Belfast on 26 March 2010, followed by 12 further regional events across Northern Ireland. Over 600 older people attended the events from community and voluntary groups within the age sector, as well as representatives from local councils and trusts, with the Mayor or Chairman of each council area hosting on many occasions.

At each event, the charity used the UN General Assembly's Principles for Older Persons (Resolution 46/91) as its framework for engagement activities throughout the day. These principles are:

- Independence
- Participation
- Care
- Self-fulfillment
- Dignity

Incorporating the UN principles into TurningPoint questions helped Age NI to strengthen its commitment to improving and enhancing the lives of older people.

An interview with Maura

We interviewed Maura after the events to find out more about how things went before, during and after the events.

How did you go about preparing? How nervous were you?

I was absolutely certain things would work – after all, I had researched the technology and introduced it to the charity. My colleagues were nervous because this was a key event for us and TurningPoint was, to us at least, a new technology. We were also interested in how older people would react to this. As a result we took hard copy questionnaires, just in case.

So, was your caution justified?

Just as I predicted, TurningPoint worked without fuss and my colleagues came on board very quickly. Avoiding the physical questionnaires was a relief because we wouldn't have enjoyed all the benefits of the system.

"The graphic illustrations were very illuminating".
An Age NI member

And what were those benefits from your perspective?
Even though we were working with 600 people, TurningPoint gave everyone a voice. As soon as people had expressed their opinion through the voting handsets, the results were there instantly for everyone to see. After the event it was really quite simple to pull all the data together and present our findings both quickly and accurately.

The added bonus was that with everything working so smoothly we didn't have to key in the results from 600 physical surveys, which saved us a lot of time!

So in summary, TurningPoint gave everyone speed and clarity, and made us look so much more professional at these key events. The proof is in feedback we received from one delegate who said they, *"Came with an open mind and felt the event was well presented. The electronic device used for voting was great idea".*

How did the groups of people you worked with find the system?
They found the handsets straightforward and the instant results both informative and exciting. As one delegate put it, *"I found the presentation and voting very interesting - the graphic illustrations were very illuminating".*

How did you handle so much data from the events?
It was relatively simple in TurningPoint to pull together such a mass of results and start interpreting them. There were a couple of times when we were unsure about what the data was telling us but it was really easy to go back in to the reports and look at the individuals sessions to cross reference what we were seeing.

- 84% told us that dignity and respect was the main hallmark of quality care.
- 80% said that having friends and family was the most important element of self fulfilment.
- 77% told us that self esteem was one of the key elements of dignity.
- 75% emphasized the need to be aware of opportunities in order to participate in community life/society.
- 73% said that having some financial security as a key element of being independent.
- 60% felt that being heard was a really important aspect of citizenship.

Overall, how would you sum up the advantage that using TurningPoint gave you?
This event was about improving and enhancing the lives of older people. We wanted give the event attendees a voice that they knew would be heard, while also launching our new brand in a professional manner. I think we succeeded and I know people believe in us - one person summed it up by saying, *"This voice will be transferred to government and assembly".*

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