

Sharpe Decisions Inc. Newsletter

Spring 2006

2006 has started off with a bang. We would like to thank our repeat and new customers for their continued support. Anytime you have a question or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Global Licensing

If your organization would benefit from having a Global License for Executive Workshop, please contact us for details.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION AND VOTING TECHNOLOGY

Electronic surveys, voting and polling have seen an upsurge in popularity in meetings of all sizes in the past few years. Group Decision Support Software (GDSS) gives your meeting validity where trust, effectiveness and efficiency are paramount. Even if the meeting size is small, value can be seen in using the anonymity of a voting system.

Whether you are running a Town Hall Meeting, Risk Assessment Workshop, Focus Group, Union Election or Strategic Planning Session these tools, through their instant result format, encourage discussion and enable the decision making process.

People love having their "say" but not everyone can comfortably put their hand up or speak out loud. With the use of voting technology people you would never have heard from "verbally" can have equal "voice" through the voting keypads. Discussion is increased due to the instant results. If participants see, through the graphs generated, that others agree with them, they will speak up. If the results are polarized, volunteers from the different view points can give their point of view and then, if appropriate, a replacement vote can be cast. In this case, the tool is enabling the learning process in the group. Information will be made available which may not have come to light without the vote result discussion.

Full featured voting software should allow the facilitator to ask Demographic questions so that they may have a quick look at who their audience is. In Corporate or Government Departments it is often asked how many years of service people have or what their level is within the organization. The results show the participants as members of "groups", keeping their individual identity secret. Demographics can then be used to cross-tab against other questions, whether they be Multiple Choice or Rating Scale, so that an analysis can be made by seniority or department. Problems can be sorted out so that solutions can be brain-stormed on-site or at a later date.

Voting questions can also be created on-site. Facilitators can have table groups brainstorm solutions to various problems and then have them voted on by the whole meeting population. All that is needed is the time to enter the solutions into the software for the vote. Decision Support is the root of this technology and this example shows how flexible and powerful the technology can be.

An example are the **TechAction Townhall Meetings** which were held across Canada by the Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance. From city to city political and business leaders were asked what they felt their city needed to attract high tech companies to their area. Ideas were voted on and the results were put in a report which was presented each city and to the Federal Government.

Hendon 2000 and the **University of Sunderland**, in England, ran a project as a partnership. Funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Hendon 2000 is a consortium of twenty-eight community and voluntary sector organizations active in the north of England, which was central in the development of a successful bid to the government's New Deal for Communities (NDC) Fund. The underlying principal of the NDC was that plans and proposals should emerge from an inclusive partnership of relevant agencies e.g. Local Authority, Employment Service, Careers Service, Benefits Agency, Voluntary and Community Sector – but that the most important partner should be the community itself.

The residents, using voting technology, were able to take an active part since at every event the facilitator explained the technology, the NDC process and the source of the ideas to be voted on. As each voting question or statement was projected on the screen, the facilitator read it out loud, then requested those present to vote when ready. The audience had a short time to view each result as it appeared onscreen. At the end of the program an open evaluation event was run where the residents used the voting technology to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Top of the list for advantages were its anonymity, the way it gave everyone a change to be “heard” and the social aspect of the events. The involvement the community had, due to the meeting structure and the voting technology, made the project a huge success.

NEW RELEASES

Anytime we release a new version of Executive Workshop make sure that you Uninstall the old version before Installing the new version. Problems will be avoided and all hardware drivers will be up-to-date.

Remember, when you see an improvement that could be made to our software we want to hear from you. Our updates are driven by client feedback.

You, our clients, are our first priority!

CONFERENCE EXHIBITING SPRING 2006

Please come by and see us when you attend of the conferences listed below:

MIS Training Institute – SuperStrategies Conference
April 24 – 26, 2006 Hilton DisneyWorld, Orlando
www.misti.com

IIA New Jersey Software Conference
May 1 – 2, 2006 *****
www.theija.org

Quality Association Conference
May 2, 2006 – Milwaukee
www.asq.org

ECOO Conference
May 3 – 5, 2006 Mississauga, ON
www.ecoo.org

IT World - Lac Carling
May 14 – 16, 2006 St-Sauveur, QC
www.itworldcanada.com

AMCTO Conference
June 12, 2006 – Blue Mountain, ON
www.amcto.com

IMA Conference
June 18 – 20, 2006 – RIO Hotel, Las Vegas, NV
www.imaconference.org

IT World – CIO Conference
June 18 – 20, 2006 Niagara Fallsview, Niagara Falls, ON
www.itworldcanada.com

www.sharpedecisions.com