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# Action Guidelines

## Procedure

# i-SME

# Action Guidelines

## Theory-based ingredients to organise an event

Guidelines for organising events to increase the intrinsic motivation of SMEs to be open for applicants with a disability and to hire persons with a disability.

### What if you:

- always wanted to have more people with disabilities working in the open labour market
- always had the ambition to have more employers opening their doors for people with disabilities
- always were trying to reach this, via campaigns, social media, meetings, subsidies etc.
- and, every time, thinking, how can we do even better

**Then the i-SME Action Guidelines might be of serious help**

**The i-SME action guidelines support you developing interventions for employers, in:**

- **doing the right thing**
- **at the right moment**
- **via the right means**
- **with the right message**
- **at the right place**



# Introduction

Less people with disabilities are working compared to people without disabilities. Many people with disabilities can work. Actions to increase the number can be initiated by law. In most cases, these actions show the traditional carrot and stick or combine them by either forcing every employer to hire persons with disabilities, with strong financial incentives when not doing, or facilitating every employer to hire persons with disabilities, with suitable financial incentives when doing.

We know forcing does not work on the long term. Facilitating does. Governments can initiate positive incentives. That helps to increase the chances. These incentives work best when there is an intrinsic motivation of employers to hire a person with a disability. And it is this intrinsic motivation that we need to stimulate, as much as possible. This is what we are aiming at with these i-SME Action Guidelines; to increase the intrinsic motivation of SMEs to be open for applicants with a disability and to hire persons with a disability. These i-SME Action Guidelines are completely based on relevant theories of changing behaviour. These theories gave us an insight in all 'ingredients' important and relevant to include, when organising events to increase the motivation of SMEs to be open for applicants with a disability. This list of ingredients, and a standardised way of working using twelve steps, form the basis for the i-SME Action Guidelines. These action guidelines take you through a number of steps to make the right decisions when developing an event aimed at SMEs to open their doors for people with disabilities as possible future employees.

## Well begun is half done!

This saying is most relevant in the context of these action guidelines. Preparing the event takes time. It takes some sessions to decide 'why to do what, where, when, how and when'. Once this is all decided, it is just a matter of organisation and celebrating the success afterwards.

## Feel free to start!



# Organising an event: a standardized way of working; topics and ingredients

In the i-SME Action Guidelines, we use this standardised way of working in:

- the ingredients to be included in the event
- the topics to think of when planning and organising

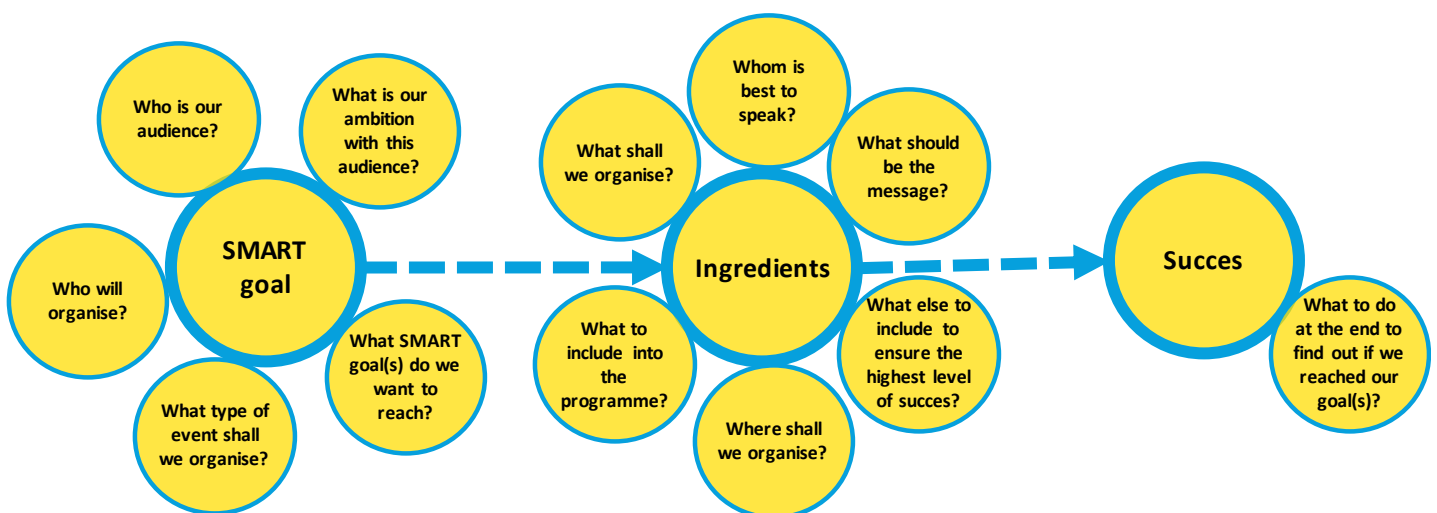
When developing an event focusing on SMEs becoming more inclusive, a standardised way of working supports you in 'doing the right thing at the right moment, via the right means, with the right message at the right place.

## The ingredients

The ingredients are those elements that influence your success. Altogether, we offer twelve different types of ingredients you can include when organising an event. Some are general ingredients, that you should always include, some are specific, like ingredients related to the invitation, related to whom to speak, related to where to organise, etc.

## Three topics to think of

If you organise an event, there are three main topics to think of. If you touch on each topic, you will work according to this standardised way of working of which we know, that is of real support to when you want to be sure to include all important elements. Each topic is divided in one or more parts, that belong to the topic.



These guidelines consist of:

- The three topics
- The ingredients
- A working document

# How to start

Start with reading about the topics and the parts of each topic, also read the ingredients; to have a first impression. Then it is time to plan and organise. Best way to do is just follow the steps!

Step 1  
**Create a team**

Step 2  
**Organise a first meeting**

Step 3  
**Work out the outcomes of the meeting**

Step 4  
**Organise a final meeting**

Step 1

## **Create a team**

Start with creating a team of partners who can make a relevant contribution, due to their role or their expertise with the subject. Think of SME owners, staff of SME involved in HR, professionals of vocational service providers, funders of the event and delegates of people with disabilities. Having this group together means having the most relevant parties together. Others can be added, because of their knowledge and expertise in the subject; think of project leaders in re-integration activities, social partners, researchers, organisations focussing on inclusion. Create a team that is small enough to make fast decisions and big enough to have the input you need to organise the event. Ask all team members to read the Action Guidelines thoroughly and ask them to already decide what might be of importance or interest to include in the event.

Step 2

## **Organise a first meeting**

Plan a meeting to come to a first lay out of the event. Start with explaining the goal of the meeting:

- to formulate the SMART goal
- to brainstorm what ingredients to include
- to brainstorm how to measure success

Make clear all parts of the table need to be filled before formulating the SMART goal. Make one person responsible for leading the discussion, make appointments about 'how to come to a decision' and then just start by using the tables on the next pages.

Include in the working document what needs to be done, who is responsible and when it should be done.

Step 3

## **Work out the outcomes of the meeting**

Write down the outcomes of the discussion during the meeting. Send the results to the team members and ask them to read the outcomes as if they 'see the event from the beginning 'till the end in front of their eyes'!

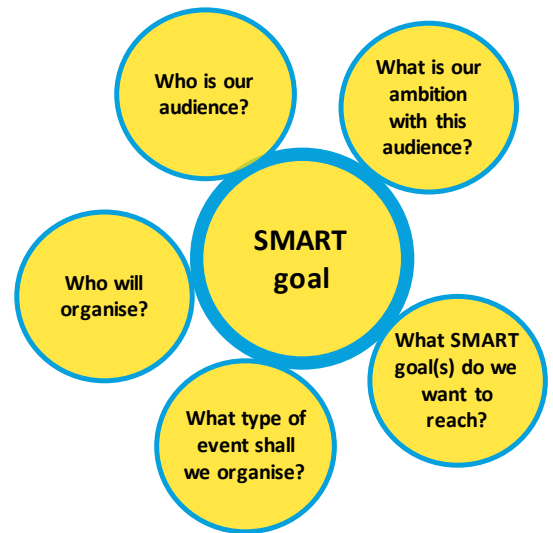
Step 4

## **Organise a final meeting**

Plan a meeting to come to a final lay out of the event. Make appointments who does what and start organising!

# SMART goal

The first topic is aimed at formulating SMART goals for your event. When formulating your SMART goal, you start with deciding who will be your audience, then you formulate your ambition with this audience, and think about the type of event you would like to organise and the last part is to formulate one or more SMART goals you would like to reach.



## Step 1

### Who is my audience?

First of all, you have to decide who will be your audience; what audience or audiences do you need to work towards reaching your ambition? It can be an audience that is directly in the position to hire persons with disabilities, like CEO's of SMEs. It can also be an audience that can influence others within the organisation to hire persons with disabilities, like for instance HR professionals, managers, union representatives. You choose your audience based on what you would like to reach: the audience that has a strong influence in realising your ambition.

The characteristics of an audience have a strong impact on all aspects related to your event. For instance, organising an event for HR of SMEs is different than organising an event for CEOs of SMEs. They have different roles and positions in the organisation, and they most probably have different knowledge about personnel issues, different knowledge about strategic aspects of the organisation, different peers whom they respect and look up to and they might be open for different messages compared to the CEOs of the SMEs. Knowing your audience means being more able to tailor your programme, your message and your speakers to your audience. One more thing to include in this, and that is the number of persons you would like to take part in your event. Make a decision on this, since it influences all further steps.

## Step 2

### What is my ambition with this audience?

Once you have chosen your audience, you look again at your ambition. What is your ambition with this audience? In other words, what is it that drives you to get this audience where you want them to be?

- A goal is a desired result that you wish to achieve; a target you want to reach.
- An ambition is a desire, it is what drives you to get where you want to be.

If your audience consists of CEOs, your ambition might be that they all are open to hire a person with a disability. If your audience consists of supervisors or managers, your ambition might be that they see the possibilities for their department to hire persons with a disability, and then they might be able to discuss with their CEO about hiring a person with a disability. Once you have formulated your ambition with your audience, you can make your ambition more specific and formulate SMART goals you would like to receive with this audience.

### Step 3

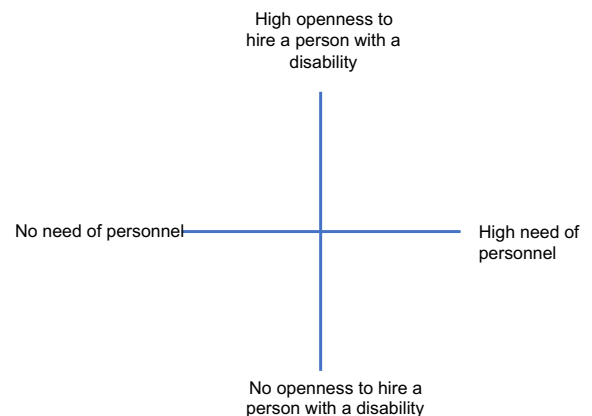
## What type of event shall I organise?

The type of 'event' is strongly dependent on your goal and on your audience. If you formulate goals related to 'informing your audience about something relevant', you better just use the channels used by your audience and send your message via these channels. For instance, if employers in your region have their own business forum, you can make arrangements to use this forum to send your message.

If you formulate goals related to 'creating awareness' or related to 'desired behaviour', like the SMART goal just formulated, then organising an event works better.

It works better since the direct contact with the audience gives you the possibility to interact, which is needed to convince and motivate individuals in the audience, and to take away possible resistance. Then, you can either choose for an online event, or a physical event. This depends on your budget and has also to do with the 'attitude' of your audience towards the subject of the event. The subject of the event is always related to the placement of persons with a disability in the open labour market, and in this case especially in SMEs.

The attitude of your audience towards this subject, is of strong influence on what you organise and on the content of your programme. For this, we use a stakeholder analysis diagram, with two axes: a horizontal axe with a left side 'having no need on personnel' and a right side 'having high need on personnel', and a vertical axe with a down side 'No openness in hiring persons with a disability' and an upper side 'open to hire persons with a disability'. We choose for this horizontal axe since there appears to be a strong relation between the existing need of personnel in SMEs and the willingness to be open for hiring people with disabilities. The vertical axe appears to be important for the content of your 'event'. Let us explain.



For those **having no need of personnel, and no openness to hire a person with a disability**, organising a physical event to inform them about hiring a person with a disability is most probably one step too far. Possibly use social media as event, or any online information message that you can hand over to 'channels' that are frequented by this audience can be a first step. Still, use as much elements as possible of the ingredients important to include, to bring them into a position that they might be more interested.

For those **having some need of personnel and some openness to hire a person with a disability**, organising an event might bring the audience into the position to be more open for hiring persons with a disability. Only then, be aware of 'overloading' the audience with lots of details about facts and figures and specific information. Use the ingredients, and keep in mind: avoid details, especially details in legislation, subsidies, organizations etc. Keep the messages simple and short. Include story telling in all presentations, whether it is about facts and figures, characteristics of the persons with disabilities, providing the audience with examples: make the story telling central.

For those **having some to high need of personnel and are quite open to open to hire a person with a disability**, organising an event can be used to give the audience this last 'trigger' to open their doors. Then, storytelling is still one of the best ways to influence the audience. Still, this audience needs to receive more details about what it really means to hire a person with a disability; specific and detailed information needs to be included.

For those **having high need of personnel and have a high openness to hire a person with a disability**, face to face meetings will be much more effective. Also providing them with information on special websites works well. On these websites, they need to find all information they are interested in; in short texts and short videos. Information on these websites about where to go to should be very clear and a follow-up when asking for information should be quickly done.

**Whatever type of event you organise, the crucial part is the ingredients you are going to include in your event. In any event, you can include ingredients that increase your chance of reaching your goals. When following the steps as described here, you will find out.**





An example of storytelling in a video: showing a bakery, the owner says 'we all love bread', when you buy our bread, you buy 'an inclusive bread', we decided to actively hire persons with a disability, in the beginning it was challenging, for all of us, for the new employee, for me and for the colleagues, but now we feel great, all of us, what counts is my business is running well and everybody feels good!

Step 4

### **Who will organise?**

The answer to this question can be found in the ingredients: Let 'peers' of your audience officially organise the meeting. Any employer will be more open for an invitation of a fellow employer compared to an invitation of others involved in the hiring of people with disabilities. When reading the ingredients, more ingredients can be used to decide who will organise the meeting. Based on these ingredients, and of course on the availability of employers, or employer organisations, you make your choice who will officially organise the meeting. In the background, all others involved can share the work needed for the organisation.

Step 5

### **What SMART goal would I like to reach?**

SMART goals support you in knowing what is needed to organise the 'event' and what you need to include in your 'event' to be able to reach these goals. It also helps you at the end to find out whether you reach your goals.

SMART means: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound. When you formulate your goals, keep in mind to 'keep it simple'. Formulate goals that are reachable for your audience. The easier to reach, the more they will be willing to follow up this goal. An example of a Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound goal aimed at an audience of CEOs of SME is for instance:

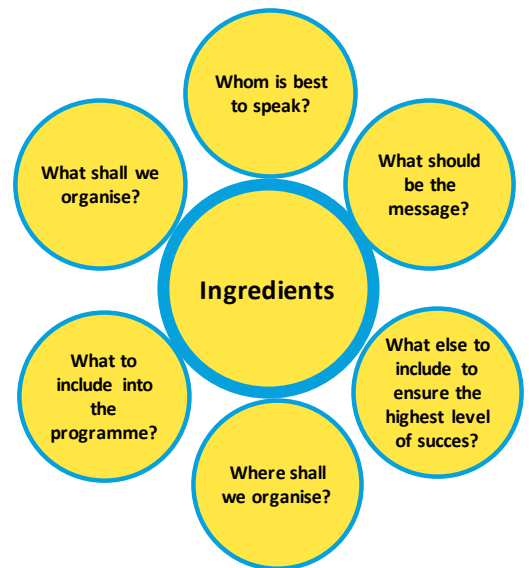
**At the end of the event, 60% of the participants of the event have agreed to say yes when the local service provider calls them in the coming week and asks for a meeting within two weeks, to explore the opportunities for including persons with disabilities in their organisation.**

It is specific (say yes), measurable (have they done it), achievable (spending ½ - 1 hour), relevant (it is about their organisation and the possibilities) and timebound (within two weeks). Once you have formulated your goal or goals, and you know your audience you can decide what type or event matches with 'reaching' this goal.



# Ingredients

The second topic concerns the ingredients. These ingredients form the basics of your event. You need them, to decide what to organise, where to organise, what to include into the programme, whom is best to speak and what will be your central message.



Where in the first topic, you need to work sequentially on each part, when working on this topic you need to think about all parts in combination with each other; each decision on each part influences the other parts. This is why you better take some time to elaborate on each part and then make decisions on all parts in relation to each other and come up with a clear plan about 'what to organise, where to organise, what to include into the programme, whom is best to speak and what will be your central message'.

## What ingredients are important to include?

There is a long list of ingredients you can include in your event. In fact, at the same time, there is a simple rule: The more ingredients you include, the more chance you reach your goals. There is only one restriction and that is the difference in the approach when having 1) an audience who is only slightly open to hire a person with a disability and has some need, compared to 2) having an audience who are open and have high need. See in the text before how this impacts your event. Best thing is to go through the entire list and see what is easy to include and what takes more effort to include. Then decide on the final list of ingredients you would like to include, make a checklist of it and use this list when organising your event.

### Step 6

#### What shall we organize?

What to organise is strongly related to 'that what your audience prefers'. You first have to find out their preference. If it is an audience of business owners, they like to meet informally, mostly at the beginning, or the end of the day and the event should be 'not too long'. Also, it is known business owners like to 'do something', while networking and hearing what you would like them to hear. Ensure you offer something original, since most business owners are already invited for many events. What is proven to be successful before, is for instance a breakfast meeting, learning a new and simple sports game like curling, let them cook and 'give them handicaps while cooking', and invite speakers while doing these activities. There are many events you can organise, and in order to make yours of interest for them, ask them and listen carefully to their ideas.

### Step 7

#### Where shall I organise?

There is one simple ingredient to be followed when thinking about where to organise an event. This is: where the audience likes to frequent, places they visit on a regular basis.

If your event focuses on informing your audience, find out which 'channels' your audience usually like to frequent. This is the place where you need to be. For instance, many CEOs of SMEs like to frequent on Facetime. Within Facetime you have the possibility to find out what pages CEOs of SMEs use most. Then inform them via these channels. Be aware of using channels they are not familiar with, or too official channels of public organizations. This is not 'the place to be' for them. If your event focuses on creating awareness and letting the audience carry out the desired behaviour, then find the physical place where they like to frequent. For instance, many CEO's of SMEs are part of local business clubs. Go there and reach out to them there, ask their commitment to organise an event by them, for their members.

**Summarising, always look for the places where your audience likes to be, likes to meet. Avoid places in which your audience do not feel comfortable, they have no connection with.**

Step 8

### **What to include in the programme?**

There is always this list of things you would like to include into the programme. First step is to check whether the parts you would like to include, match with what is needed according to the ingredients. If so, include them, in the sequence as is mentioned in the ingredients list. If you would like to include something apart from the ingredients, please check why you would like to include it and what would be the added value for the audience to include it.

Formulate a SMART goal for this part, and then check what ingredients are matching with the part you would like to include. For instance, if you would like to include 'the mayor or the minister to speak about the moral responsibility of the audience', then check whether this matches with the ingredients. And, if not and you still would like to include, then look for ingredients to create a larger chance of success when doing this.

Better is to stick to what is mentioned in the ingredients as important to include as 'a subject' and the way it will be presented.

Step 9

### **Whom is best to speak?**

In the list of ingredients, there is a description of 'the speakers'. Always take into account these descriptions, since the type of speakers has a strong influence on the willingness of your audience to act according to your goals. Always check whether your speakers meet the requirements mentioned in the ingredients list. If you feel unsure, be open in this and do not hesitate to discuss this with your speakers, or change the speakers.

Step 10

### **What should be the message?**

The message you formulate for your audience should be simple, repeated many times and your audience should be emotionally 'touched' by this message. This is why you have to think carefully about your message. Best way to find out whether your message 'touches' your audience, is to check beforehand with representatives of your audience. There is a simple rule: ask the user. If you follow that rule, and leave aside your own feelings about what is important and how the message should be delivered, and just listen to those belonging to your audience, your message will be as strong as you would like it to be.

How do you do this? Formulate your ambition and your goals and ask a small group of 'insiders' belonging to your audience about their opinion, include them in the organisation and make them part of your team. And then let them decide about the message and the way it should be presented.

Step 11

### **What else to think of, to ensure the highest level of success?**

In the list of ingredients, many aspects are mentioned that have a direct influence on the behaviour of your audience; the desired behaviour formulated in SMART goals. Check this list once more, whether you might be able to include extra parts you haven't thought of before. And then include them in your personal checklist and include these ingredients in the organisation of your event.

# Success



The last topic has to do with the results you planned, with finding whether you reached your goals. For this you need to answer the following question:

Step 12

## What can I do at the end to find out I reached my goal?

At the end of your event, you can check whether you have reached your goal.

The formulation of SMART goals enables you to carry out an evaluation at the audience. In most cases it means you ask them, either by sending them a link to an online questionnaire, either by asking them during the event, either by sending them an email afterwards with some questions related to the SMART goals.

For instance, the earlier formulated SMART goal can be transferred into questions:

The SMART goal: 60% of the participants of the event have agreed to say yes when the local service provider calls them and asks for a meeting within two weeks, to explore the opportunities for including persons with disabilities in their organisation.

### The questions:

Did you agree to say yes when a local service provider calls you and asks you to meet you?

Yes or No?

If no, please explain why you did not agree to say yes?

If yes, have you met this person within two weeks after calling?

Yes or No?

If no, why not?

If yes, did you together explore the opportunities in your organisation to hire persons with disabilities?

Yes or No?

If no, why not?

And then, you have your answers. You can include one more question, since it gives you an insight whether you come closer to your ambition, though officially it is not part of your goal: What was the result of this exploration?

After this part, the usual elements when organising something need to be arranged too. That is, making a short risk analysis, and activity list and 'other things to think of'. Ensure to give attention to these parts!

## In conclusion

When organising events for SMEs with the ambition to make them more inclusive, you can rely on your own gut feeling. You can also use these theory-based ingredients and consequently follow the steps just explained. We can guarantee, when doing so, the chance of reaching your goals will increase substantially!





Inclusion simply makes great enterprises



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