

Post-Convening Momentum Builders

Convenings have enormous potential to inspire commitment among those who attend. Yet, translating the inspiration and energy achieved at a gathering into concrete action is one of the greatest challenges of convening. We've all experienced the effect of wanting to contribute, but returning to a busy day job that takes higher priority. This guide provides tested approaches for sustaining a convening's momentum into the following weeks and months. We recommend implementing one idea from each category to generate the greatest return on investment.

Keep relationships strong by establishing communications infrastructure

Post-convening action is often driven by the accountability felt in interpersonal relationships. Reduce friction for keeping relationships strong by providing a platform for ongoing communication and collaborative work.

Create a WhatsApp Group, Slack Channel, or other Group Communication Platform

- Select a platform that is broadly used by participants and create a private, shared space for ongoing conversation.
- We recommend creating the channel during the convening itself, so that participants can “break the ice” by coordinating activities outside of formal programming.
- Set an example for the communications channel by sharing progress, fresh ideas, and connections.

Rationale: Creating a communications platform signals intention to keep this group engaged and provides a mechanism for the ongoing attention required to sustain relationships.

Offer clarity on “what comes next” by defining the next milestone and establishing working groups before departure

Bridge the gap between inspiration and action before the convening ends by proactively communicating to participants what the next milestone will be in the work and identifying specific opportunities for participant contribution.

Schedule a 30-Day Post-Convening Check In

- Before the convening even begins, invite participants to a virtual session 30 days following the convening.
- The purpose of the session should be to reconnect, demonstrate initial progress, and communicate what will happen in the next phase of work.
- Invite participants to sign on to specific actions on this call. Even the participants who left feeling inspired will welcome clarity on how they can best support the work.



Rationale: This timeframe gives the organizer sufficient time to synthesize insights, regroup, and put forward a clear and concrete list of post-convening actions. The “glow” of the convening will have faded for some participants, and a call provides the opportunity to inject energy back into the group for continued momentum.

Plan a Gathering at a Global Event or Conference

- Use a global event where the majority of participants will be in attendance as a milestone (e.g., UNGA, COP, or another global conferences relevant to the work).
- Spend time at the initial convening planning what will be accomplished by the conference date, and how it could serve as a leverage point for further progress.
- If appropriate, plan a working session or launch event and engage participants to support planning.

Rationale: Take advantage of the group planning to be together in one physical location to create positive pressure for progress in the work. At minimum, it serves a moment for reconnection and deepening participant relationships.

Create Working Groups

- In the action planning portion of the agenda, clearly delineate 3-5 concrete streams of work that are needed to maintain momentum post-convening.
- Invite participants to sign up for a specific working group that is aligned with their expertise, connections, and energy. Ensure a lead is designated for each working group.
- Include time in the agenda for working groups to “get started” and to schedule a next meeting. This decreases the friction to keep moving once everyone has returned home.

Rationale: Participants often leave convenings inspired but unsure of how they can individually contribute. Identifying specific streams of work that will move the group towards its goal, and inviting participation on those workstreams, makes the next step more concrete.

Model ongoing engagement by taking the first step in the room

Set the tone and expectations for how participants should continue to engage by incorporating the type of action you hope they’ll take into the final day of the convening itself.

Post Card Exchange Activity (15 minutes)

- Hand out a postcard to each participant. Be sure to have a few extra on hand in case anyone requests a second.
- Invite participants to write a note to another participant at the convening who they hope to collaborate with afterwards. Ask them to be specific on the nature of the collaboration and the expected timeline for getting it off the ground.



- Ask them to share the postcard with the potential collaborator before departing.
 - Alternate: If there's concern about imbalance in an outsized share of post cards being received by a select few participants, the organizing team can collect the cards and distribute them with discretion.

Rationale: Writing down an idea increases the chance it will be acted upon. The physical artifact also creates a reminder upon return home.

Send the Email Activity (15 minutes)

- Invite participants to reflect on one specific contribution they can take to advance the work after Bellagio. Ask them to select something concrete, such as making an introduction to a potential partner or sharing a relevant report with the group.
- Give 10 minutes for participants to take the first step in this contribution. This may be sending an email, setting up a meeting, or sending materials to the organizing team.

Rationale: Momentum can decline as participants return to their busy schedules and catch up on what they missed while at the convening. Get ahead of that trend by creating space for participants to take the first step in the room.