



Common types of engagement

Fans forum

A public meeting called by the club where typically you would find a top table of senior executives/directors/football management who may give a brief presentation and then take questions from supporters. Although it provides an opportunity for people to ask what they like, the forum set-up makes it hard to get into detail on complex issues and topics can vary dramatically given the number of people attending so the flow of questions and answers often changes quickly.

It can also be an intimidating environment to ask questions that might be seen to be more sensitive or 'difficult'. It suits 'meet the manager' type events, rather than meetings that require more structure. For the club it is a useful way to engage with many fans in one go and can provide a forum that is unselective and appears welcoming to all. A number of clubs have taken to partnering with local radio stations who provide both a chair for the meeting and live broadcast.

Fans Parliament / Supporters Advisory Board (SAB)

In the engagement pyramid the FSA see this as the next level up. The creation of an SAB may be driven by fans or by the club but for it to be successful both parties must collaborate on its creation and its running. A SAB will typically be made up of 6-12 fan representatives, elected from various fanbase groups (e.g. season ticket holders, members) or nominated representatives from leading supporter groups.

The SAB will meet periodically with the club's senior staff to discuss topics in detail, as the smaller group allows for more constructive and detailed dialogue on a focussed agenda. The SAB may also opt to create sub-committees to tackle specific projects, e.g. ticketing, new kit design. These sub-committees can work with club staff in between scheduled SAB meetings, reporting back to the main group.

A SAB would normally be expected to work to agreed representation processes and an MOU signed with the club.

Structured dialogue

The FSA views structured dialogue as discussions that would usually take place between two or three reps from a supporter group, club execs, directors and possibly owner. It is possible that the supporter reps could be from multiple groups.

Progressive dialogue allows for trusted discussions on strategic club business which could include finance and club operations. It can also be used to cover specialist topics that might be of specific interest to certain supporter groups, an example might be topics that inclusion and diversity groups tend to lead on.

Supporter directors

Even without supporter ownership it is possible to have supporter directors and many clubs are recognise the benefits of appointing one. A true supporter director should be appointed independently of the club, perhaps nominated from the board of the Trust or leading supporters' group.

The FSA recommends that the appointment should be through a staged selection process to ensure a good quality and trusted appointment. For them to be effective in the role their appointment must be welcomed by the club and they must be treated as a true director, party to all discussions, decisions and information.