

Peter Ammann, Municipal Councillor, Besenbüren (AG)

«We were able to defuse controversies.»

Besenbüren has a population of just 667 inhabitants. But on the topic of waste, emotions ran high. Municipal Councillor Peter Ammann turned to BrainE4 to clarify outstanding issues — for the second time.

Mr. Ammann, you are a municipal councillor in Besenbüren, responsible for the “Public Utilities” portfolio. What was your challenge?

It was about waste management. Our population is changing as well.

Urban densification has led to many condominium owners moving in. As a result, there is a desire to change the waste management system. Specifically, door-to-door collection and drop-off systems are being weighed against each other. Any change would require an amendment to the waste regulations. That may sound a bit dry, but it really stirred up emotions here.

You surely had an idea of what people wanted, didn’t you?

There are a wide variety of different preferences, and waste management is already a relatively complex topic in itself. That’s why we couldn’t rely on just a few individual opinions. Initially, the idea was to launch a survey. But that would have been too limiting. So, we started looking for another solution. Fortunately, that solution was already on the table: we had already used BrainE4’s online dialogue for another topic — school facilities.

«Standard surveys were too limiting for us.»

What was your experience with BrainE4 in relation to the waste management issue?

In the first online dialogue, it was important to provide a clear explanation of how the tool works so that everyone could participate via smartphone, desktop, or tablet. BrainE4 is largely self-explanatory, but since this web app was new, questions still came up.

What was, for you, the biggest difference compared to previous forms of participation?

The playful way of dealing with opinions. Everyone can share their ideas without being immediately criticized. Twice a year, we hold our “Political Apéro,” where current topics are discussed, and we engage in direct contact with the community.

But there, you have to expose yourself. With BrainE4, anonymity is guaranteed.



Everyone can share their opinion without being exposed to criticism. Every opinion is respected and treated fairly. I see this as the biggest difference: fair participation is possible for everyone — even for those who are not present at the assembly.

What challenges did you encounter?

Since we learned from the first online dialogue, we didn’t face any difficulties this time.

As a small municipality, financial matters must be a concern for you.

Including the population was already planned in our budgeting and could therefore be commissioned through BrainE4. However, since the costs are also based on the number of participants and their activities, we had to keep a close eye on the cost ceiling.

«Every opinion is respected and treated fairly.»

What are the main differences between the first and second online dialogue with BrainE4?

When it came to the school facilities, we achieved very good participation. We had that in the second case as well — but we found that the emotions around waste management were stronger. The dialogue was much more intense. That also surprised the BrainE4 team.

Facts and Contact:

Municipality of Besenbüren (AG), 667 inhabitants

Online Dialogue:

7 open questions

101 participants

276 opinions and ideas

19’817 interactions

Municipal Councillor:

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You received a comprehensive results report.

The results report is indeed very comprehensive. Shortly after the online dialogue ended, we made it available to the public on the web. The report is insightful and informative. However, the municipal council has not yet issued an official statement.

So, no decision has been made yet based on these findings?

Exactly. Clear trends have emerged, but the decision will be presented at the next Political Apéro. If it is met with a positive response, it will be developed into a concept and then submitted for a vote.

What is your conclusion regarding this online dialogue with BrainE4?

This method allows emotions to be channeled and managed optimally. And if we succeed in explaining the results convincingly, then in the end we will have a vote on a waste management concept that is broadly supported by the population.

Where and to whom would you recommend BrainE4?

Anywhere decisions need to be made that can be influenced by emotions pulling in different directions: for me, BrainE4 is the ideal tool.

«With BrainE4, emotions can be channeled and managed optimally.»

Are you thinking more of large cities or small municipalities?

In principle, it doesn't really matter. I see no restrictions. I've already discussed this instrument with people from larger municipalities, who were generally enthusiastic about the approach and the results.

What do you think is central?

The content! There must be a controversial situation that cannot be explained technically. Put simply: BrainE4 can defuse controversies.

After your positive experiences — what are your hopes?

That this instrument continues to be developed. BrainE4 is already very good and has great potential. If it is continuously adapted to needs and keeps pace with technological possibilities, it will have long-term success.

Interview: thk.