

# Organising a Business Event ?

Organising a business event can often be a stressful time for the promoter. You need to consider where to start and what to expect, who and how many will attend, and most importantly you need to ensure that those who do attend find it beneficial and interesting.

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## 1 BE CLEAR

What is the event? Whether your event is a small gathering, a product launch, a business workshop or a large conference it is extremely important to set objectives. Objectives should focus on all aspects of the event from pre-event planning through to post event evaluation and should include measurable targets in terms of audience, number of people attending, format of event and event outputs (for example press coverage, new customer leads, knowledge shared, contacts made and allocated budget). Being clear at the outset will enable you to measure how successful your event has been.

## 2 EVENT FORMAT

Prepare an agenda covering the format of your event, schedule all activities from the time delegates arrive through

to the close of the event. Include a breakdown of timings and remember to allow sufficient time for registration, refreshments, networking and photographs. Be innovative and discuss your ideas with colleagues, employees, family or friends.

## 3 HOW MUCH HAVE YOU GOT TO SPEND?

Whether you are spending £500 or £5000 it is important to set a budget and manage it. Think about pre-event costs such as preparing invitations and advertising in local media. Also give thought to the number of guests likely to attend. This will help when deciding venue and food costs. What about guest speakers or workshop facilitators?

## 4 THE AUDIENCE

Who do you want to attend? Will it be staff, business people or people from the local community? It is important to know your target audience so you can use the most appropriate platform to promote your event and make sure your event takes place at a time that best suits your guests. Should it be early morning, mid-morning, afternoon or evening?

## 5 PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Develop an action plan by preparing a simple spreadsheet with all the tasks that need to be addressed from pre-event planning and promotion through to post event evaluation and follow up. Get colleagues and employees or friends and family involved. Allocate tasks to your team of willing helpers with deadlines for completion. You are the promoter and therefore should not get caught up in the detail. Don't micro-manage as you will need to take a global view of the event, and remember to have regular team meetings and communication to monitor progress.

## 6 LOCATION

When selecting a venue you should consider location. Will it be easy to find, is there good parking facilities, what about disability access, will the rooms be suitable in terms of size and seating capacity, what catering facilities are available and are there options to cater for special diet requirements? Request a breakdown of costs and check the detail – are there any additional costs in terms of renting multimedia equipment, Wi-Fi connection, etc.

## 7 CREATING AWARENESS

Creating the right message about your event is vital. The message should communicate what your event is about, the benefits of attending and who should attend. Remember to have clear details on your invitation in terms of venue, directions, time and catering arrangements. Think about the benefits to your audience, remember they are giving their time to attend and time is precious! When promoting your event think of all the different platforms available that can be used to spread the message and what would work best – traditional invitation, emailed invitations, press release, community and business newsletter, social media such as Facebook or LinkedIn, website links or complimentary business groups and networks?

Think about how delegates should register for the event, will it be an open invitation to turn up on the day or should they pre-register by a certain date and should they pre-register by telephone or email? If there is a fee attached you can request delegates to register and make payment online.

There are many event registration websites you can use for this purpose and to draw down fees all you need is a PayPal account.

### 8 ON THE DAY

The big day has arrived! If you have all your plans in place everything should run smoothly and your delegates should enjoy your event. Remember as promoter, don't get caught up in the micro-management, you will need to take a global view, have time to meet and greet, network with those attending and if needs be fine-tune any last minute details.

### 9 EVALUATE

Quite often after the event we all sit back and relax, but remember you still have a little more work to do. It is important to evaluate the success of your event against

your original objectives. What worked well and what areas could have been improved upon?

### 10 FOLLOW UP

Remember to follow up with those who attended and those who were unable to attend. All too often contacts made can quickly be lost due to poor follow up and sometimes all that would be required is a simple email just to say thank you.

And finally, if you would like to promote a future business event or profile a past event, please send your information and photographs through to the IntoBusiness magazine team by contacting Ballymena Business Centre on 028 2565 8616 or email [info@ballymenabusines.co.uk](mailto:info@ballymenabusines.co.uk) 

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