

# 7 steps to successful and safe community events

## Reference Manual

**SUPPORTED BY  
WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**

**Chris Powell  
The Event Expert**

[www.theeventexpert.co.uk](http://www.theeventexpert.co.uk)

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**Winchester**  
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## Introduction

Designing, planning and delivering events is a bit like directing a live stage show. However, unlike a show, there are usually no dress rehearsals, safety nets, or run through and once your event has started - no second chances.

### **What makes a well-planned, memorable and effective event?**

**Just to get you thinking, let us take a look at the key ingredients of a great event:**

- A definite purpose for the event: why are you running it, what are its aims?
- Clear and agreed objectives: what are you trying to achieve?
- Good organizational structure: do you have good reporting mechanisms and sufficient resources to do a good job?
- A committed team: everyone is committed to the event and its success
- A high-caliber leader: that is probably you!
- Precise and detailed planning: attention to detail is the key; everything is done properly or not at all
- Realistic timescales: do not take shortcuts; can you achieve everything you want to achieve in the time available?
- Efficient and effective communication: ensure everyone knows what is happening and when
- Contingency plans: what could go wrong and what is your plan for dealing with it?
- Effective publicity that is interesting and targeted: if you do not tell people about the event, they will not come
- The welcome: a warm friendly one is vital; a smile and first impressions count
- Excellent customer care: ensure everyone provides fantastic service throughout the whole event; if your staff are not good at this, the audience will not come back or recommend you to their colleagues and networks
- The event programme: speakers, artistes, attractions, entertainment, activities—should run on schedule and be varied in style and format
- Pricing structure: your audience can afford it and perceive it to be good value for money
- Food and refreshments: are they appropriate and adequate?
- The look and feel: create the right atmosphere
- Venues: ensure they are clean, comfortable, and convenient, with professional staff and great internal event signage
- A great emcee: this person will bring your event to life
- The event itself: make sure it is enjoyable, memorable; your audience believes it's had a good time and spent time with other like-minded people"
- A thank you on departure in person!

## 1. Event Purpose

Developing the type events that other people would like to attend or participate in requires you to do a little research.

Typically, you are looking for answers to the following:

- Any up-and-coming emerging trends
- Any new activities beginning to make waves or working well in another part of your community or another part of country that could work in your community
- Any already identified demand.
- In terms of similar events, is there existing competition from other clubs or organisations in your area? If so, can you or should you compete with them?
- Do you have enough of the right type of people and organisations to promote to, to make it viable?
- Do your research: online, talk to colleagues (all departments), former event attendees, possibly interested parties
- Have some thoughts about any items of equipment and things you might need to hire and guesstimate their cost. It's useful to have some idea of potential expenses

### **Reasons to event: Why.**

I have listed below the types of reasons why organisations run events. Work your way through the list and consider the reasons why you are running your next event:

- Exchange information or ideas
- Provide training
- Educate, enlighten, and expose people to new ideas or ways of thinking
- Thank people, partners
- Awards, anniversaries, celebration
- Support a company-sponsored charity or project
- For a partner organization
- Celebrate milestones, national occasions, and campaigns
- Develop a mailing list
- For competition
- For fun, entertainment, excitement, escapism, nostalgia
- Raise money for a good cause
- Send a message
- Increase brand awareness
- Improve quality of life, feel-good factor, to make a difference
- Recruit or retain new or existing people

You now need to select one overarching event aim, which is the reason why you want to run an event, and choose subsidiary aims if you need to. Everyone on your event planning team should agree to your aims.

### **Who are you running this event for?**

Events need audiences or they fail. You therefore need to have a clear idea as to who your likely attendees will be: who is likely to want to come to or benefit from your event? Consider whether they are:

- Your signed-up supporters, previous event attendees or newsletter readers

- A new untapped market
- The community as a whole. NB – be warned it is very hard to target a whole community. I might be easier to break it up into smaller known groups
- A particular sector of the business community
- A sector of your local population in terms of age, gender, location or interest
- A predetermined audience, such as invited guests or dignitaries

Every event planner needs to create an audience profile. Without it you will try and fail to please everyone. Be specific which part of your community are you trying to attract to your event.

Ultimately, you need to be confident that you will have enough of the right people with the right mind set; the money, authority and time to make your event idea worth investing time, effort and money in.

### **What do others think about your event idea?**

Armed with a very basic outline of what you think your event could be, it is time to establish what other people think of your idea – gather some evidence to suggest that it is going to be time and money well spent.

It is also important to find out what your target audience thinks of your idea. You could conduct a short survey with a few questions about your event plans. Do you have a list of known event attendees, lists of newsletter subscribers or active members of your community? If so, select a sample and send them a short survey as follows or call them:

- We [organization] are thinking of organizing [type of event] because we want to [reason for the event]
- It will be at the [XYZ] venue
- It will be at [24-hour time] on [date]
- The event programme will include [give outline details of the event programme, for example workshops, speeches, entertainment, ticket price]
- Please tell us what you think about this
- Would you consider attending this event?

Target Audience/Profile: The following link may provide you with a better understanding your community

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata>

## 2. Presentation: event design and programming

### **Designing your event:**

With a clear idea of why and who you are organising your event for and an indication that others think your idea is a good one you are now ready to start designing the event:

You may have been given an event brief from a client or manager. If not clarifying the event brief will give you a complete description of the task as follows:

- background information about host organisation
- details about the event's target audience
- principal purpose
- key timelines
- any "must happens" (speech by chair, award)
- the budget

At this presentation stage, what you're trying to do is create a blueprint of your proposed event in words, pictures, images and/or numbers but always with your overarching purpose in mind and audience. What is your event is going to look like? Feel like? What are people going to do? And crucially what sort of take-away memories do you want your visitors to leave with.

### **Here's some design ideas to get you thinking**

Designing a great event is not something you can easily do on your own. For help in generating lots of great ideas it's a good idea to look for people who have creative flair and for those who have a range of different experiences and interests. Between 5 and 8 people for an events committee is normally about right.

- Marquees / temporary structures
- Bespoke stages / backdrops
- Lighting to create atmosphere
- Outdoor lounges / chill out spaces
- Special effects / lasers / fireworks
- People stories / pre-event conditioning activity
- A shareable moment: quote, message, activity, picture moment, game changer
- Art / animation
- Photographic displays, illustrations, art works, animations
- Street entertainment, mix and mingle
- Gifts / giveaways
- Decoration, tables, venue, layout
- Music: live, recorded
- Interactive technology
- Themed Event
- Video, photos, projection screens
- Historical element
- Games / competitions / tasters
- Things to do, learn, exhibitions, stalls
- Mass participatory activities
- Speakers / presentations / acts
- Demonstrations / workshops

- Tours and visits
- Food to eat, make

### **Theming your event**

If it's appropriate and the budget or your ingenuity allows then theming an event is a nice idea. The chosen theme may select itself because of the occasion or it will be a key creative decision for the event planning team. And once agreed, all event elements must fit the theme and be relevant, coherent and possibly wow!

Anything can be an event theme

Colours, numbers, historical events, health, exercise, films, fashions, statements, legislation, countries, campaigns and so forth.

You can theme: venue, decorations, entertainment, catering, sounds and lights, special effects, the programme, the staff, models, presenters, props, food, all forms communications, transport

### **Event programme**

The event programme outlines what your audience is going to do, take part in, listen to, watch and eat. It is the schedule of activities, entertainment, speakers and catering over a set period. It can make or break an event. It has to be exciting, interesting, engaging, enjoyable, and memorable and contain moments of "you heard it here first": little nuggets of advice or information.

Event programmes are constructed much like a play, scene by scene. Each element of the programme is carefully considered by the event manager in terms of its impact, relevance and time taken. In an ideal world, the event programme should flow from one thing to another with occasional breaks for people to catch their breath.

### **The event programme: entertainment**

There is a wide range of entertainment available, some of which you may already have in your community. Here's some ideas:

- Bands
- DJs
- Soloists
- Quartets
- Choirs
- Singing waiters
- Magicians
- Mind readers
- Casino Tables
- Master of Ceremonies
- Caricaturists
- Circus Acts
- Dancers
- Pianist
- Balloon modelling
- After dinner speakers
- Comedians

With regard to the Jubilee celebrations this link may give you some ideas around themes

<https://www.royal.uk/platinum-jubilee-central-weekend>



## **Engaging your audience**

In order to create memories, it's important to create activities that engage your audience members.

You may ask why well...these activities help create memories, enhance learning and the overall event experience.

What are they going to take part in, learn about, experience, try out, solve, decide...to make it sticky!

Here's some ideas:

Encourage involvement / interactivity - challenges, questions, voting systems, conversations, workshops, decision making, quizzes, games, debates, mass participatory activities, practical demonstrations, panels, 30 second soundbite, parades

## **Booking entertainment and activities**

While we may all be familiar with the process of booking services - a great deal of thought needs to be taken when booking entertainment for your event. Here's a few questions you need answers to:

- Why do you need entertainment?
- What entertainment do you need?
- Where do you need entertainers?
- When do you need entertainers?
- How long do you need entertainers for?
- What time do you want entertainers on site?
- How long do they take to set up / break down?
- How many accompanying personnel: numbers, needs, roles?
- What press work will they / won't they do?
- Availability for rehearsal?
- Their requirements - space, technical, safety, hotel, transport, parking?
- References / vetted / talent / member of an appropriate association.
- Back-up plan: equipment failure, sickness, non-appearance.
- When do you want them to leave?
- Cost and / or agreed percentage of takings or earning potential.
- When and how will they need paying?
- Contract (agent) and or other legal conditions.
- Sight of risk assessments and insurance certifications.

## **Booking a great speaker**

When booking a speaker, you need to choose wisely as there is a lot at stake. Do they:

- Bring an immediate emotional and mental connection.
- Have stage presence and an energy, which captivates and lights up the whole auditorium.
- Know their primary job is to delight, inspire, engage, entertain and inform the audience: know their subject.
- Will your audience like them, increase sign ups?

## **Setting some event targets**

To ensure your event can demonstrate real value for money or effort it is worth setting some objectives. These will give the event team something to aim for and something to measure the success of the event against.

- Number of attendees
- Numbers signed up
- Volunteers recruited
- Money raised
- Awards achieved

## Events Catering

A lot of events offer some form of catering:

- The style and extent are dependent on budget and type of event planned.
- Clearly, if you are trying to impress, then your food needs to impress too!
- If you have an event theme, try theming your food: rename dishes, consider creating bespoke dishes where possible.
- Could you have themed festival offering - involving local restaurants?

Anybody providing food at your events must comply with health and hygiene regulations, have a food safety management scheme using for example the HACCP plan, be registered with a local authority as well as provide evidence of their public, employers and product liability insurance, risk assessments and food hygiene certificates.

## Licenses

Temporary Events Notices (TENs)

TENs can be used to authorise relatively small-scale ad hoc events held in or on any premises involving no more than 499 people at any one time if you intend any of the following activities:

- the sale of alcohol
- Provision of late-night refreshment - hot food or hot drink at any time after 23:00 or before 05:00.
- Entertainment

Premises Licenses

If a larger event is planned then you will probably require a Premises Licence if the same activities are going to take place. Further information can be found on the WCC website using the following links.

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/licensing/alcohol-entertainment-late-night-refreshment>

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/licensing/alcohol-entertainment-late-night-refreshment/premises-licences>

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/licensing/alcohol-entertainment-late-night-refreshment/temporary-event-notice-ten>

### **3. Planning events**

Now you have a clear idea of the what, who, why, where and when of your event - your event brief, it's time to start planning it - to make it happen. At the event planning stage, it is all about the detail, your ability to drive the process forward, stick to the agreed event aim and hit those key deadlines.

#### **Recruiting your event planning team**

An event planning team usually consists of two to ten people and comprises your immediate colleagues, departmental representatives, committee members, partner organizations and any outside experts you need to fill any gaps in understanding or skills.

You must hold and schedule regular event planning meetings, which should be purposeful and productive occasions designed to solve problems, stimulate ideas and generate action. Each meeting must have an agenda, minutes, action points, and a start and finish time.

Typical agenda items are as follows:

- Introductions and welcomes
- Apologies
- Minutes of last meeting
- Review of event project plan
- Event programme review and update
- Budget review and update
- Venue search, evaluation and site planning
- Exhibitors update
- Staff review and update
- Marketing plan review and update
- Agree priority work areas
- Event day operational planning
- Set next project team meeting
- Any other business

These meetings play a crucial role in ensuring the success of your event. You should assign each member roles and responsibilities and everyone needs to understand that it is critical that they pull their weight.

#### **What factors should we consider when setting your event date?**

- Availability of audience,
- Type of audience being invited e.g., families with children, time and day is important
- Past event history
- Likely weather conditions
- Other local events
- School holidays
- National events
- Time of year
- Is it the right time of year for your event?
- Availability of key services, activities, people
- Long weekends including a bank holiday can be difficult for your target audience, as may often take an extra day or leave earlier to set off for a trip away
- Significant religious occasions - that make it difficult for your target audience to attend

- Other events happening at the same venue
- Availability of a key venue

### **Event Project Plans**

A Gantt chart created on Microsoft Excel generally works in terms of managing the planning process of the event and provides you and your team with a visual representation of your event. Like any other project there will be a series of sequential (and parallel) tasks with deadlines.

Typically, your event project plan will include tasks relating to the following key work areas:

- Setting of event aims and objectives
- Design and creative tasks – brainstorming, themes, event briefs
- Venues - selection of, site visit, booking, site planning
- Planning – infrastructure requirements, contractors, insurance, Health and Safety
- Programming - timings, booking of key personnel, joining instructions
- Operational tasks – relating to the set-up, event and break down
- Finance – securing funding, costing, budgeting
- Marketing – pricing, all promotional activities, public relations
- Administration – updating the plan, sending out information, signing contracts

A word of warning - each one of these work areas will need to appear in the project plan on more than one occasion. They are not actions that can be completed at once; you will have to revisit them on several occasions.

### **Picking competent contractors**

**You may need to hire contractors to provide you with services such as:**

- Portable toilets units – single units to fully-plumbed trailers
- Marquees – of all shapes and sizes
- Stages – of any size for indoor use or covered for outdoor use
- Fencing / barriers to guide people or keep them out
- Event communications (staff) – two-way radios
- Event communications (audience) – public address systems
- Facilities for people with disabilities – ramps, viewing areas, specialist toilets
- Electrical contractor – providing cabling, lighting, connecting up to power source
- AA / RAC traffic directional signs
- Catering - outside units, mobile caterer, hiring kitchen units
- Waste disposal – bins, litter pickers
- Fire prevention systems - fire extinguishers, fire blankets, sand buckets, no smoking signs
- Audio visual - laptop, screen, lectern, microphone, flipchart, need for Wi-Fi / internet connection, use of video and sound
- Lighting – indoors and outdoors
- Sound systems - from very small to very large, public address systems
- Power - small to large generators
- Decoration - flowers, balloons, props, table centres
- Transport companies – taxis, coaches, buses
- Cleaning - venue, toilets
- Security / stewarding - times, numbers and roles
- Event stewards / staff / security
- First Aid - St John Ambulance, Red Cross, NHS

You can find these contractors in the normal way through search engines, directories, sector-specific trade associations and your colleagues.

- Has the company written a risk assessment for the services they provide and have they implemented any necessary control measures?
- Do they have a current Health and Safety policy?

You should also ask them to provide: (UK)

1. The name, company, address and telephone numbers of two references
2. A copy of the company Public Liability Insurance Certificate
3. A copy of the company Employers Liability Insurance Policy
4. A copy of the company Product Liability Insurance Policy
5. A specific copy of their risk assessment covering the services being provided to your event. Please ensure you do not accept a generic company risk assessment
6. A copy of their Professional Indemnity Insurance is also recommended.

It's also nice to know they have relevant event experience – they understand your world, have any necessary qualification or awards, are pleasant to work with and are happy to offer solutions. Whilst you might think this is a little over the top, consider the consequential loss of money and reputation if you don't undertake some basic checks and then there was an accident.

### **Contracts**

It is imperative you have a signed contract with all of your key service providers. It will give both parties the reassurance that comes from knowing exactly what they have agreed to and what happens if you or they break the agreement in any way.

As a basic minimum, your contract will have the following headings:

1. The parties
2. Definitions of services
3. General conditions and rights
4. Term – dates
5. Price
6. Payment
7. Delivery conditions
8. Obligations of both parties / warranties / liabilities / insurance
9. Assignment or sub-contracting
10. Force majeure - act of God
11. Termination rights, breach, insolvency
12. Disputes and jurisdiction
13. Signatures

You should have a contract in place for any of the following:

- Venue hire
- Ticket agency
- Event management company
- Supplier contracts
- Catering
- Event staff – through an agency

## Event budgets:

All types of events cost something! Here's a few tips when managing the event money.

- Agree up front what your event financial Strategy will be: lose, breakeven, profit, spend the budget, make some income
- Breakeven point: Fixed (constant) v variable costs v income level

To get the figures right you will need to do something research and forecasting:

- identification of sources of income (funding / income generation determining costs – programme, contractors
- No. attending
- Ticket price or pricing strategy
- Master budget / function budget
- Set financial spending/ income procedures
- 5% contingency budget

*The money... requires constant monitoring and review: seek to replace estimates with actuals, request written quotes, contracts, payment terms*

## Event insurance (UK)

All events must carry an appropriate level of insurance cover, so you **MUST** check to see exactly what cover you or your organisation already have in place. Ask the difficult questions: you need to know what you are or are **not** covered for. Never assume anything!

The three **key** policies relating to events are as follows:

1. Public Liability
2. Product Liability
3. Employers' Liability

Other general insurance policies relevant to events and event managers are:

- Non-appearance - when the key person does not turn up!
- All risks / equipment hires - typically covers loss or damage to goods hired to you
- Cancellation / abandonment / postponement - covers actual event costs / income lost
- Damage to event - covers damage to a venue before, during or after the event
- Rain - covers income lost through ticket sales because of rain, and costs already incurred
- Event specific policies – such fireworks, street parties, exhibitions
- Multiple events - as the name suggests, cover for 15+ events a year
- Prize indemnity - financial reimbursement for prize pay-out

You will not require all of these policies to be in place every time you organise an event but as a basic minimum, you will need Public, Employers' and Product Liability; if you intend to sell products. I would also recommend all risks / equipment insurance if you intend to hire any high-value equipment.

This link can help explore your insurance options: <https://www.needabroker.com.au/>

## **4. Place: Event venues**

A great venue really sets the tone and sense of occasion for your event. A thorough evaluation of the venue and what it has to offer you must be undertaken to determine whether it is a good match for your event and your organisation.

The venue is very important to the success of your event. If the venue doesn't live up to expectations, delegates will blame the organiser!

### **Conducting a venue site visit**

If you have a selection of possible venues to choose from, the following may also help get the best out of your site visit.

#### ***Stop***

- Give the venue your full concentration
- Compile a list of questions - use the event venue evaluation checklist as a guide

#### ***Look***

- Consider if it is attractive and looked after well, and if it reaches a good standard of cleanliness
- Try to visualize your event taking place there and take photographs
- Look everywhere inside and outside that is relevant
- Think about the set-up and break-down
- Ask to see a Health and Safety Plan

#### ***Listen***

- Are the entire venue's staff polite and courteous?
- Are all your questions being answered to your satisfaction?
- Do you get the impression that they are genuinely interested in helping you deliver a great event? (Being able to build up a strong relationship with the venue manager will make such a difference when you require changes on or near event day.)
- Meet the venue's event day team. Can you work with them?

### **Event venue quotes**

#### **Consider the following:**

- Hire costs for a room, the rates for a part-day, all day or per head, or for land hire, and make sure you know exactly what you are getting for your money
- Costs of all food, drinks rates and related service charges
- Costs of all other items and services hired by or provided to you
- Written quotes, with or without VAT (local tax)
- Repayment schedule, such as a deposit to secure the site or payment in full, up front or after the event

You will want to review the following detail before confirming your booking in writing.

1. Review it to check, for example, that all the dates and details match up to your expectations

2. Clarify certain clauses to make sure you know, for example, the minimum numbers that your pricing schedule has been based on and what might happen if you do not achieve this number of attendees. Would you have to pay the difference? (This is often known as an “attrition clause”.)
3. Check whether the venue would guarantee room rate prices, menu pricing and so on
4. Make sure you know whether the cancellation period is based on days or working days (ensure it is working days)
5. As a general rule, remove all exclusivity clauses, such as those relating to audiovisual suppliers. Removing these clauses will give you more choice. (You may indeed end up using the in-house supplier but, without an exclusivity clause, you can at least check out other companies to see how they compare.)
6. Check cancellation charges to see if the venue will be charging you any interest and, if so, what the rate will be
7. Clarify what constitutes, in the venue’s opinion, a breach of contract
8. Do check to make sure you are allowed to use the venue’s logo on any of your event publicity
9. Do make sure all amendments to the contract are completed to your satisfaction and a new typed copy is forwarded to you to sign and return

These sites will help you understand your options in terms of venues in Winchester

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/open-spaces>

<https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?bcr=1>



## 5. Promotion

Your event may be the next big thing but, if your event promotion misses the mark, your event will fail.

**Great event, poorly promoted = certain failure**

The aim of all your promotional activities must be to draw people to your event: to excite them to buy, enquire, email, talk to you, sign up, purchase tickets or to register interest.

It is important to use a combination of great words and visuals wherever you can. Events actually operate in the people-to-people market. People are the ones who make all the decisions, so make sure your promotional material reflects this fact-be human and appeal to people's emotional sensibilities.

### **Event promotional plans**

Every event must have a promotional plan. Depending on the size or importance of your event, the plan may be quite a simple affair with few activities or something that contains multiple activities and preparatory tasks.

Here are eight stages you should consider when putting an event promotional plan together:

1. Set some objectives. What is the purpose of your event promotional plan?
2. Do an audit of what promotional media you already have or can access; it would be wise to conduct a SWOT analysis at this stage
3. Decide who your audience is and create an audience profile
4. Create the content and key messages
5. Select what media you are going to use, then cost it
6. Test, check and review your content and plan
7. Implement the plan
8. Monitor each part of the plan to determine what is working, namely delivering the numbers, sign-ups and enquiries

In more general terms, it is wise to also be aware of the following:

1. Do you know exactly who your target audience is? Where do you find them? What are the voices in their head saying? What problems do they have? (Clearly your promotional material and content needs to be speaking to your audience)
2. How does your target audience typically find out about events?
3. The more you spend on the event, the greater the risk, the harder you have to work to get people to the event and, therefore, the bigger the promotion budget you need
4. For new events, you may have to spend around 15% to 20% of the total event budget (creative input, graphic design time, print costs, distribution costs, adverts, updates) on promoting it
5. Where you are purely promoting to an existing list of subscribers or members, it is possible to spend little by way of money. However, you have to be persistent. Very few of us actually sign up straightaway and we will need persuading, so offer great incentives. Most of us need from three to seven "touches" before we do anything; some need a lot more
6. Your promotional plan needs time to succeed. We are all busy people with hectic lives, who need time to plan any event visits. I would recommend a 12-week lead-in time.
7. Keep building your list; the more prospects you have on your list the more people you can market your events to, and consider the need to purchase a list of the right people

8. If you know your audience uses social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, it might be beneficial for you to do the same; however, it might be a good idea to take expert advice before running a social media campaign
9. It is important to think beyond a company's own customers in order to draw a large audience—think about with whom you can collaborate. Can you create a joint venture with a non-competing partner? (Support from them usually means getting access to their list, which adds legitimacy and reach to your promotional activities.)
10. VIP lists—consider if there are any people (such as industry or thought leaders) you really do want to attend, and allow them complimentary passes; their presence will provide kudos and may encourage others to sign up.
11. Be realistic, not optimistic, about numbers

**Here are some of the event promotional possibilities available to you:**

- Adverts in magazines, newspapers, specialist, parish
- Adverts on radio, TV, be interviewed
- Direct mail, text messages, DVD
- Exhibitions, guides, listings, events diaries
- Press releases, editorials, advertorials
- Open days, seminars
- Personal selling, speeches—a personal message from key individuals
- Speak about your events, networking events
- Money-off coupons, pricing offers
- Save-the-date campaigns
- Public relations, stunts, events, hospitality
- Event web site
- Email, blogs, podcast, social media, mobile phone, newsletters
- Advertising
- Email signature text, live link
- Banners, pop-ups, drops
- Leaflets, stickers, inflatable blimps
- Partnerships—forming mutually beneficial joint ventures and alliances; you could double your reach
- Literature download, “get your free report here”
- Packaging, promotional branding on parcels, packages
- Postcard marketing

**Events and social media**

*(NOTE: I am not a social media expert but I know a little about it. As ever, seek advice from experienced professionals who have good reputations in presenting people through social media.)*

Using social media will help generate interest in your event but it is not the silver bullet- the deliverer of a full house. Nor is it a substitute for more traditional promotion. It is something you should do alongside other methods. Its real value is in driving traffic to your event web site, to generate interest.

Many businesses seem to believe that the online world is the only place to promote their events. True, it is important. But neglect offline event promotion at your peril. Social media is a two-way dialogue, not a one-way sales funnel. Overtly sell and your fans will not love you anymore. You must therefore use a mix of online and offline promotional media.

The overriding success factor remains, as always, that content is king. The essence of good social media content in terms of events revolves around the phrase “who can you help”. All the event content you put up therefore needs to reflect this. To increase your visibility on social media platforms, aim to create content that incorporates wherever possible text, pictures and a video, or at least two of these.

**In terms of what your audience would like to hear about or receive information about, try some of the following:**

- Personal insights into behind-the-scenes at festival HQ
- Mentions in the press, with links
- New programme items
- Interviews with the stars of the event
- Pictures of programme activities, entertainment, speakers
- A video of programme activities, entertainment, speakers, venue
- Teaser information
- Special offers
- Surveys, discussions and polls
- Customer feedback and testimonials from previous event delegates

Those who use the various social media platforms effectively post information regularly, seek to open up conversations, share information and gently suggest what action the audience should take next. Each post must link back to your event web site.

### **Creating event web sites**

As the vast majority of us now use search engines to find anything out, it is important that you have a web presence, a page on an existing site or, better still, your own event web site.

However, if your event is purporting to be a “little special”, you clearly need a web site to match.

**Ideally, your event web site would contain all or most of the following:**

- Event name - brief overview
- Day, date, time, capacity
- Sponsors and links
- Pricing policy and offers
- Online ticketing, registration, e-commerce, payment methods, downloadable forms
- Sign up to workshops tools, appointments system
- Social proof - testimonials, photos, videos of past events, statistics
- Video about the event that paints a picture of the event, a mini-commercial
- Top ten reasons to come, to exhibit
- Destination guide - information about the location, things to do, facts about the place; think in terms of a visitor’s trip, a day out, local tourism contact
- Venue - detailed description of the venue, such as how to get there by foot, car, bus, train, from all possible directions
- Include maps, car parking details, any charges, walking times to event from car parks, any special arrangements in place for disabled people, coach parties
- Clear navigation channels—if you are thinking of attending, “click here”, or exhibiting, “click here”
- Nearby hotels, accommodation and any special offers available to delegates

- Event programme at a glance - speaker, artiste, biography. What will the audience learn? You could also include a 60-second promotional video from each speaker
- Site plan
- Frequently asked questions section
- Attendee and exhibitor lists
- Dress code, if appropriate
- Any social networking links or ways for delegates to connect before or at the event
- Further information contact points - phone number, email address
- Show offers
- Common branding across all promotional media
- A system for adding news items, blogs, programme updates
- Any details of what you will be making available during or after the event, like copies of presentations

When you are starting out, you are not likely to be able to afford all of the above but do try to improve your event web site year on year. Take note of what your audiences are saying and try to deliver a web site that answers all, if not most, of their enquiries.

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## 6. Production

Producing an event is like directing a play: it is built, scene by scene. There is a necessary and logical order to planning an event and getting this right is important. Essentially, you will need to break down your event day into its component parts and work out what needs to happen first, second, third and so on.

The best way to manage this stage of your event is to create an event operational plan or function sheet, taking into account the following:

1. Arrival times - event day management team, contractors, event day staffing team, programme activities, the audience and participants. When do you need everyone on site and in what order? (Key to the success of this stage is the accuracy of the event joining instructions.)
2. Agreeing public opening times - ticketing, registration and admissions. With opening times agreed, you can then work backwards from this time and calculate how long you will need to get everything and everyone in place. (Setting up an event will always take longer than you expect.)
3. Implementing the event site plan - as your various contractors and event team arrive to help you set the site up, do make sure you have your site plan to hand and that everyone is following it. (A copy of the site plan should form part of your operation plan and should be sent to key staff, the venue and any contractors prior to the event.)

### **Event operational plan**

The important thing at this stage of the event production process is to assume nothing and double-check everything.

An events operational plan is a sequenced list of tasks to be completed on or before event day and will include the following:

- A full chronological running order of everything that needs to happen, detailing time, location, person responsible
- Team rotas, numbers, and roles
- Programme of speakers, demonstrations, acts
- Schedule of estimated arrival and departure times - of staff, contractors, speakers, guests, teams,
- Useful names and telephone numbers - for contractors, speakers, staff, venue manager, others
- All agreed catering requirements - menus, drinks orders, locations, numbers, and so on
- All special instructions about the venue, site, layout, access arrangements, contact numbers, parking, and so on
- Guest lists, delegate lists and their activity choices, if appropriate
- A full site plan with any accompanying notes
- Contingency and any back-up plans
- List of VIPs, arrival times, special conditions, protocols, and so on
- Emergency plans

The following people will need a copy of your operational plan:

- Venue
- Key staff
- Caterers
- Any other key contractors

## Event joining instructions

Your staff, contractors, volunteers, speakers and entertainers must be given full joining instructions. The accuracy of these instructions sent out or detailed on the event web site are vital to the overall smooth set-up and running of your event. The following should all appear in the joining instructions:

- A full postal address and post code of the venue
- Maps to the site, an overview of the route and a very detailed local map containing any significant landmarks and street names
- Details of when you want them to arrive and what they are to do on arrival, for example to call you or to stay in the car park
- Details of the date and time by which they need to be set up
- Details of anything you have agreed to provide for them
- Times of when they can access the site to break down or complete their work
- Whether they require a vehicle or event pass to access the site during set-up and break-down
- Details of how they can access the site during the event. Are you allowing vehicles onto the site once the event has started and, if so, how? Do they need to call you first before trying to access the site, so you can arrange for one of your event stewards to help them get onto the site safely?
- Details of any site-specific break-down requirements that you may have, for example do exhibitors or contractors need to leave the site as they found it, or do they need to take away their rubbish?

It is also good practice to send them an overview of the event, such as an outline of the programme content, opening and closing times and (if relevant) a flyer, so they know what they are attending and can tell others about it.

## Contractor, speaker and entertainment arrival requirements

The following list will help you to decide what information you require from each contractor or activity before they arrive on site:

- Full supplier contacts details and addresses
- Exact details of the service being provided, contract or purchase order number
- The sort of access requirements that the venue needs—such as access to an unloading area and knowledge of who needs to authorize the use of these areas
- How long it takes them to set up and complete their work
- How much space they need to set up
- Who will be supervising their work whilst on site, including their name and mobile number
- Who will be driving the vehicles to site, including their name and mobile number?
- The services they are expecting you to provide for them—such as power, refreshments, fencing, security
- The relevant safety or fire risks associated with the activity during set-up and during the event
- Do they understand what you expect of them during the event?
- Can they provide you with a 24-hour contact point (depending on what they are providing) in case of failure?
- What is the back-up plan should vehicles break down on their way to the site?

Make sure that you have also requested and received the following:

1. All their event risk assessments, safety documents, certificates and insurance details

2. Confirmation that they have received and understand everything you have sent them, such as maps, passes, special conditions

In a nutshell, put everything in writing and post it to them all. In addition, phone them all to make sure that they have received and understood all the information and joining instructions sent to them. Do not rely solely on email, as you may find out to your cost just how many emails are *not read*.

### **Briefing your event day staff**

Your event day team will often be a mixture of volunteers, paid staff and contractors. All of them require clear guidelines as to what it is that you want them to do. For smaller events, this might be a short staff briefing meeting and some notes containing information such as:

- An introduction, overview of the event
- Roles and responsibilities on site, your staffing family tree (who they report to)
- Expectations of event staff
- Who the other contractors and key people are on site
- Event and venue evacuation procedure
- Event programme
- Site plan
- List of mobile phone numbers or radio channels (or both)

So, what do you expect those helping you on event day to do? The following list (also mentioned in the event planning section) will give you an idea of what the typical roles and responsibilities of a volunteer or team member should be on event day:

- Know who is who on site
- Control traffic movements on site, in and out of the car parks
- Carry out fire and no-smoking patrols
- Keep emergency routes and gangways clear at all times
- Deal with enquiries and log any accidents or incidents
- Give advice on the event programme
- Learn the site layout, location of key facilities, entrances, exits, first aid
- Keep an eye out for any overcrowding issues, particularly near entrances and exits
- Monitor the audience and guests
- Be aware of the location of, and be able to use, fire-fighting equipment
- Know what to do in an emergency
- Keep the site clear of litter
- Concentrate on their duties and only leave their post when told to do so
- Wear clothing and a name badge that clearly identifies them as event personnel
- Remain calm and courteous towards members of the public at all times

Your event team may be required to carry out all or some of the above.

### **Event Health and Safety**

Central principal – those responsible for creating the risk i.e., Event Managers have certain duties to “discharge”. Employers (event organisers) have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their staff and volunteers as well as protecting the health and safety of people not in their employment who

could be affected by their work. Employees also have a duty to themselves and to protect those who may be affected by their work. All Premises / venues have similar responsibilities but please remember they are not responsible for your actions and activities while you running your event. They will ensure that the building, fire extinguishers, safety procedures etc. that they are responsible for are maintained.

Management of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1999 (UK) employers have a duty to carry out Risk Assessed work

### General safety requirements at events

- **The venue:** permitted uses, appropriate management
- **Management:** who's in charge, competent staff, safety checks
- **Means of escape:** signage, clear gangways, safe places
- **Fire precautions:** tested extinguishers, trained staff, fire proofing, good housekeeping
- **Lighting and heating:** adequate, safety lighting, electrical protection, prevention of unauthorised access
- **Electrical Installations:** access to for normal operations and emergencies, no public access, safety signage, tested and inspected.
- **Structures:** marquees, stages, grandstands
- **Barriers:** location of, type, fit for purpose
- **Toilets:** numbers of, male / female, water and washing facilities
- **Noise levels:** continuous noise levels, peak levels, measured, noise sensitive buildings
- **First Aid:** number and type, appropriate for event
- **Seating arrangements:** maintenance of walkways, linked together, occupant capacity
- **Staff:** competent, trained, numbers
- **Accessibility:** ramps, removal of obstacles, clear information, viewing areas, repair of pot holes etc., disabled toilets
- **Catering:** Times of arrival, opening + closing times, location, size of pitch required, valid insurance certificates, Food hygiene certificates, local authority registration details...
- **Event Traffic Impact assessment:** before, during and after event to prevent congestion, Police/Highways authorities, road closures, traffic marshalling, public transport – buses and trains, Coaches – arrival point/pick up point, Car Parks - AA/RAC signed, separate entrance for emergency vehicles, times for permitted on site vehicular movements... For events not including Jubilee events (the road closure notice period has passed) this link will guide through the road closure process in Winchester <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/roads-highways/special-event-road-closures>
- **On-site communication:** Inter-professional communication public information and communication
- **Emergency plan:** what will do you do if faced with a range of emergencies

### Health & Safety at Events – Risk Assessment

Health and Safety is one of the most important aspects of event organising. It is a matter of understanding the risks and how to control them. There is a legal requirement for the prime organiser at any event to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The following chart identifies some issues for you to consider. Once you have identified and analysed the risk, you need to show how you are going to reduce that risk.

#### The following are some examples of hazards at events:

- Moving vehicles and possible conflict with pedestrians
- Emergency vehicles unable to get on site
- Slips, trips and falls
- Hearing damage from loud music
- Structural collapse, falling items—stages, marquees, PA towers



- Fire - caterers, structures, electrical, gas, cooking oils
- Food poisoning
- Litter left by the public, stallholders and caterers
- Public disorder - crowds, queues, horseplay
- Danger from electrical installations or electrical failure, such as lighting failure
- Weather - too wet, too hot, too windy and the resultant risk, such as dehydration
- Arena acts - depending on the act
- Other attractions, entertainers, stalls, inflatables, simulators
- Medical emergency
- Fairground, bouncy castle, other attractions—accidents, mechanical failures
- Special effects, fireworks, laser shows
- Alcohol and drugs, and their effects
- Health and hygiene - toilets, washing facilities
- Noise - too loud for staff or neighbours
- Manual handling
- Working at heights
- Lost children
- Barrier fencing failure
- Incorrectly supervised or managed games or activities
- Hazardous substances (COSHH)
- Terrorist attack

Here is a simple matrix which shows how an event should be assessed.

	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>S E V E R I T Y</b>
<b>High</b>	3	3	2	
<b>Medium</b>	3	2	1	
<b>Low</b>	2	1	1	
<b>LIKELIHOOD</b>				

**Severity**

- High = Fatality – major injury causing long term disability
- Medium = Injury – an illness causing short term disability
- Low = other injury or illness

**Likelihood**

- High = certain or near certain
- Medium = reasonably likely
- Low = Very seldom or never

**Risk Rating**

- 3 = High risk
- 2 = Medium risk
- 1 = Low risk

The following shows the assessment in more detail:

		Severity					
		Multiple Death	Single Death	Major Injury	'3 day' Injury	Minor Injury	None
		10	8	6	4	2	1
LIKELIHOOD	Certain 10	100	80	60	40	20	10
	Very Likely 8	80	64	48	32	16	8
	Probable 6	60	48	36	24	12	6
	Possible 4	40	32	24	16	8	4
	Unlikely 2	20	16	12	8	4	2
	Very Unlikely 1	10	8	6	4	2	1

Notes:

The numerical scale used is to allow comparisons of the risk levels only. No literal meaning is implied by the scoring level. 'Major Injury' shall be as defined in Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Key to Shading

<b>100</b>	Level of risk is unacceptable.
<b>24</b>	Level of risk may be tolerable. Seek to reduce level of risk.
<b>12</b>	Level of risk is acceptable

Definition of likelihood classes

<b>Certain 10</b>	Has happened before and is expected to happen on this occasion
<b>Very Likely 8</b>	Has happened before and is very likely to happen on this occasion
<b>Probable 6</b>	Has been known to occur before and is likely to happen on this occasion
<b>Possible 4</b>	Has been known to occur before and it may happen on this occasion

<b>Unlikely 2</b>	Has been known to occur before but no reason to suggest that it will happen on this occasion
<b>Very Unlikely 1</b>	Has never happened before and there are no reasons to suggest it will happen on this occasion

#### Abbreviations used in Assessments

P = Public

S = Staff

A = Artistes/Activities/performers

*Credit The Risk Assessment chart was compiled by Richard Limb of The Symonds Group*

Another type of Risk Assessment and sample method statement

#### Event Risk Assessment

1. Please use this as a guide to identify hazards associated with your event and work through it to prioritise risks and detail the control measures you will take.
2. This list is not exhaustive. Please add any other hazardous area associated with your event to this assessment if not already included.
3. A Risk Assessment should be completed during build-up and breakdown as well as continuously throughout the event.

#### Fire Risk Assessments

The production of event Fire Risk Assessment is also now a legal requirement too. A fire risk assessment should follow the following format.

1. Identify fire hazards
  - Sources of ignition
  - Sources of fuel
  - Sources of oxygen
2. Identify people at risk
3. Evaluate, remove, reduce, and protect from fire
4. Record, plan, inform, instruct and train
5. Review

Check out this Hampshire Fire and Safety link for detailed advice on event fire safety

<https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/safety/leisure-and-lifestyle/public-event-safety/>

#### Accident Reporting

All accidents to staff, delegates, contractors or other participants in the event must be recorded in the Accident Report Book. Some accidents/injuries need to be reported to the Local Authority Environmental Health Office of the area in which the accident took place as well as the local authority in which your organisation is based. Records must be kept for at least six years.

The following Health and Safety Executive link provide very comprehensible Event Health & Safety. Use the search facility to locate specific points of interest to you

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm>

## **7. People – YOU!**

You have now completed all your research, planning, promotion, venue evaluation, programming, procurement, and contracting and event production. The successful conclusion of your event is likely to have been a team effort, driven forward by you, the event manager. How you perform as the event manager during the build-up to event day and on the day, itself will be a crucial factor in ensuring the day is memorable for all the right reasons.

### **The role of event manager**

#### **The role of the event manager at this stage is twofold:**

- Role 1: is all about the managing the practicalities of running an event
- Role 2: is all about managing your various event teams

### **It's event day**

Today is the day - the culmination of all those meetings, conversations, debates, phone calls and emails. It is show time! So, as the event manager, pitch up nice and early and be ready to:

- Know what needs to happen and when
- Observe and listen to everything that goes on
- Advise, guide and manage the set-up
- Solve problems and make quick decisions
- Implement and monitor the event safety plans and risk assessments
- Keep communicating, talking to everyone
- Help and inform event visitors
- Calm and diffuse difficult situations
- Keep control
- Conduct press interviews
- Run the programme to time
- Keep visitors safe—actively monitor how the site is being used
- Lead and manage your event teams

And, of course, to . . . deliver an outstanding event!

Chris Powell

[www.theeventexpert.co.uk](http://www.theeventexpert.co.uk)

## **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: The Carnival is dead - long live the Carnival

Appendix 2: How to run super effective event planning meetings

Appendix 3: Example simple event expenses budget sheet

Appendix 4: Example simple event income budget sheet

Appendix 5: Few events ever sell themselves. How do you SELL OUT your event?

Appendix 6: Example XYZ Festival - date / year: Operational Plan

Appendix 7: Sample Risk Assessment Event template

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## Appendix 1: The Carnival is dead - long live the Carnival

As festival season is well under way my thoughts turned to the more budget end of the festival market - local carnivals and community events. But I hear you say aren't carnivals a thing of the past, something you were taken too when you were a child. So, is there still a market for such events? I think so.

With our (event managers and our clients) obsession to produce ever more spectacular events: because that's what everyone expects (nee demands) and because we live in a multi-sensory, multi-visual world, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that community events, which make up the vast majority of our events programme still have a really important role to play. I would argue that they are more important than any multi-million-pound spectacular. Why? Because your big bucks ticket only ever buys you a seat at the event - as a spectator. Community events more often than not allow us to be a participant, to be involved. I suspect too that the 1000's of volunteers who give up their time freely to organise these events perhaps get a greater sense of achievement of a job well done than event professionals like myself. Another point worth noting is that these events are run on amounts of money you and I may routinely waste on the corporate food bill!

So, I say - long live the Carnival! I know they are really tough to organise and you may get let down at the last moment...sounds familiar? But in my experience when somebody or a group of enthusiasts really drives the process forward other people, clubs, associations really do want to become involved - it's about 'spreading infectious enthusiasm'. On a family holiday to Alderney, I was reminded about what it's all about. Alderney Week is put together with just a small amount of money and a sack full creativity and enthusiasm. These guys organise something truly memorable every year and in fact it's the non-participants who are conspicuous by their absence.

Alderney Week consists of a colossal 50+ events in 8 days. That's a lot going on. Particular highlights for me are the Torchlight procession, Fashion show, Alderneys Got Talent, Open Air Theatre, Daft Raft race, Sandcastle Competition, Waiter / Waitresses Wheel Barrow Race to name but a few! There literally is something for everyone and that's the beauty of it. Everyone can find something they can take part in, watch and / or organise.

I know we are all busy people but I implore you to support your local events. They may not be the biggest, brightest or possibly the most beautiful, but I am often very pleasantly surprised by what I see, so go along to these fetes, parades, talks, shows, fun days...they need your support and your pounds! And if you are the person that makes these events happens: I say thank you – you're doing a great job.

And to the learning. The majority of event managers do not operate in the world of big budget events. I've worked in both worlds. Creativity is everything. Try a bit of what I call 'creativity thinking without boundaries' think what if we... as for every 'big ticket event item' on your event wish list, there is always a cheaper solution but you need to look for it. The simplest ideas often deliver the greatest return. On the creativity front - I have my moments but it is not one of my natural skills sets so I have to work on it. I have for some time now made a point of reading the event industry press and attended anything and everything I can. I visit galleries, museums and pitch up at industry led seminars. Anything that helps me see what's possible.

Remember event audiences the world over just want to have a good time. So, our job is to make it this happen: to make them smile: to teach them something: let them be part of something special and to allow them to play .... simple? Long live community events - they Rock!

## **Appendix 2: How to run super effective event planning meetings**

Ever sat in an event planning meeting waiting for conversations to actually lead to a decision? We all know taking decisions is indeed hard. Endless convivial and often circular conversations are alas the easy option.

Now I like to chat just like the next person. Alas many of the event's meetings I have attended over the years have felt more social get together than focused planning session. At the end of the meeting, I need to know that we have made the best use of this 'precious time' together. The catch-up chatter can happen once the meeting business has concluded and last as long as you like or other plans and lack of coffee dictates!

### **Making every event planning meeting minute count**

I am not saying we cannot have a laugh; drink coffee and eat biscuits. What I am saying is that meetings should be purposeful and productive occasions designed to solve problems, stimulate ideas and importantly generate actions. Like event programmes it should have an objective, be sequenced and start and finish on time.

To add to this if you want a really productive meeting (a meeting people feel has genuinely achieved something: moved your event a step closer to a successful conclusion) I suggest using a decision-based agenda. When the agenda is sent out to all participants it tells them that the following XYZ decisions are going to be taken at the meeting. In the accompanying email you would remind everyone of this fact and ask them to come prepared.

The practicalities involve allowing say 20 minutes for a group discussion (ensuring all relevant parties are heard). At the 19<sup>th</sup> minute start to wind down the discussion, prepare a summary of the options and then ask people to make a decision and go with the majority. This process carries on until all the listed decisions are taken. Once this has happened, you can return to standard agenda items such as the project plan and budget.

Event planning meetings need to consistently deliver decisions and not more chat. Why? Because every time you don't make a key decision you could be compromising the potential success of your event. The longer it takes to make decisions the less time you have to promote your event: increasing the chances of possible failure.

Well run face to face event planning meetings are indeed a fundamental part of a successful event. They do however need to be active decision-making occasions and not talking shops.

To Events!

### Appendix 3: Example simple event expenses budget sheet

**Event name**

**Dates**

**Venue:**

**Total budget: £30,000.00**

item	Unit cost	quantity	Total
Tent Company	£4,000.00	2	£8,000.00
Catering	£5.00	100	£500.00
Chairs / tables	£2.70	100	£270.00
AV/ PA / Lighting	£8,000.00	1	£8,000.00
Security	£15.00	10	£1500.00
Porta cabins	£546.00	2	£1092.00
Waste Management	£68.80	10	£688.00
Barrier fencing	£960.00	1	£960.00
Toilets	£80.00	10	£800.00
Contingency			£500.00
<b>Running total (net)</b>			<b>£22310.00</b>
VAT @20%			£4462.00
<b>Running total (gross)</b>			<b>26772.00</b>
<b>Over/under budget</b>		<b>Under</b>	<b>-£3228.00</b>

Please note: You can also create a budget with a set of projected costs alongside a set of actual costs, followed by a column called 'variance'



#### Appendix 4: Example simple event income budget sheet

**Event name**

**Dates**

**Venue:**

item	Projected	Actual	Variance
Food & craft stalls	£5,215.00	£5,215.00	£0.00
Outside stalls	£1,775.00	£1,775.00	£0.00
Funfair	£400.00	£400.00	£0.00
Face painter (15%)	£50.00	£30.00	-£20.00
Simulator (15%)	£80.00	£80.00	£0.00
Pony Rides (15%)	£80.00	£80.00	£0.00
Ice cream (15%)	£80.00	£80.00	
Jewellery workshop (15%)	£50.00	£40.00	-£10.00
Sponsor a Barrel	£500.00	£500.00	£0.00
<b>total income</b>	<b>£8230.00</b>	<b>£8200.00</b>	<b>-£30.00</b>

Please note: With income budgets you can add columns for ticket sales, ticket price, units sold, and totals. You can also add columns for any estimated ticket sales v actuals and a variance column if you have specific income needs.

## **Appendix 5: Few events ever sell themselves. How do you SELL OUT your event?**

Getting people to turn up to your events is tough. I know. Very few events and certainly none of the ones I have worked on have ever *'sold themselves'*. Persuading somebody to part with the cash or just to register requires tenacity, creativity and determination. You simply can't bash out a few circular emails and think it will work. A structured, detailed and thorough event promotional plan is a necessity.

**Here's a truism:**

***Great event, poorly promoted = certain failure***

Your event may be the next big thing but, if your event promotion misses the mark, your event will fail. The aim of all your promotional activities must be to draw people to your event: to excite them to buy, enquire, email, talk to you, sign up, purchase tickets or to register interest.

It is important to use a combination of great words, visuals and sharing facilities. Don't forget that people are the ones who make all the decisions, so make sure your promotional content reflects this fact – be human and appeal to people's emotional sensibilities.

### **Event promotional plans**

Every event must have a promotional plan. Depending on the size or importance of your event, the plan may be quite a simple affair with few activities or something that contains multiple activities and preparatory tasks.

Here are eight stages you must consider when putting an event promotional plan together:

1. Set some objectives. What is the purpose of your event promotional plan?
2. Do an audit of what promotional media you already have or can access. It would also be wise to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis (SWOT) at this stage – so you know where to plug any gaps in knowledge.
3. Decide who your audience is. Where do you find them? What are the voices in their head saying? What problems do they have?
4. Create the content and key messages. Clearly your promotional material and content needs to be speaking to your audience. It needs to make compelling reading.
5. Select what media (on /off line) you are going to use, then cost it. Your choice of media is determined by whatever your target audience typically uses. The amount of money you need to spend promoting your event depends on the size of the risk – big budget event (big risk) requires a big promotions budget.
6. Continually test, check and review your content and the plan. Run split tests to see which campaign (subject line) headline has the greatest traction. And be ready to make all necessary changes quickly and deviate from the plan, if a better opportunity arises.
7. Implement the plan. Run it to time and create continuous urgency. Delays in getting the word out can be very costly.
8. Monitor each part of the promotional plan to determine what is working: namely delivering people, sign-ups and enquiries.

It is also wise to note...

1. When promoting to an existing list of subscribers or members, you still have to be persistent. Very few of us actually sign up straightaway and we will need persuading, so offer great incentives. Most of us need three to seven “touches” before we do anything. Some need a lot more
2. Your promotional plan needs time to succeed. We are all busy people with hectic lives, who need time to plan any event visits. I would recommend a 12-week lead-in time.
3. Keep building your list of subscribers, fans or audience database. The more prospects you have on your list the more people you can market your events to.
4. If you know your audience uses social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, it might be beneficial for you to do the same. However, it might be a good idea to take expert advice before running a social media campaign
5. It is important to think beyond a company’s own customers in order to draw a larger audience – think about with whom you can collaborate. Can you create a joint venture with a non-competing partner? (Support from them usually means getting access to their list, which adds legitimacy and reach to your promotional activities.)
6. VIP lists. Consider if there are any industry or thought leaders you really do want to attend your event Invite and send them complimentary passes. Their presence will provide kudos and may encourage others to sign up.
7. Be realistic, not optimistic, about numbers

## Appendix 6: Example XYZ Festival - date / year: Operational Plan

This will give you an idea of what an operational plan can look like. I suggest you add everybody's mobile number and any useful notes alongside each entry

Day	Activity	Who / mobile no.	v / comments
<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>			
8.00am	XYZ tents arrive on site to build tents	XYZ tents,	
9.30am	Meet X at? To collect equipment	?	
7.00pm	Security overnight handover	? / XYZ Security	
<b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>			
8.00am	Meet XYZ tents on event site/ finish build	?	
	Hang craft tent / beer tent banners	XYZ tents	
10.30am	Collect stillage from Salisbury	?	
9.30am	XYZ Cabins x 2	Delivery?	
9.30am	? toilets arrive on site to main entrance	Delivery?	
9.30am	? on site to take beer deliveries	? beer team	
10.00 to 16.00	Beer deliveries arrive	Beer team	
Am	? deliver cash tills to event control	? cash tills +?	
Am	? Comms deliver PDQ machines to event control	Delivery?	
12.00noon	? Waste Management - delivering bins to site	Waste Management	
12.00	? deliver on site Generators / lighting towers	? delivery	
PM	? Extinguishers delivery	Delivery?	
PM	Event Communications delivery radios	Delivery?	
PM	XYZ catering units x 2	? catering	
1.00pm	XYZ funfair on site	? + (Fair)	
3.00pm	? set / stock up bar	Beer team	
6.00pm	? Security on site	?	
Pm	AA Signs go around town	AA signs	
<b>Thursday 10<sup>th</sup></b>			
9.00	? (Event manager) arrives on site	?	
9.00	? electrics on site complete electrics	? electrics	
9.30	? Fence Hire on site	Delivery?	
AM	XYZ deliver outdoor furniture	?	
1.00pm	XYZ Scaffolding arrive to build cider bar	Delivery?	
4.00pm	Set up ticketing lanes	?	
6.00pm	? overnight Security of site	?	
<i>To be continued</i>			

## Appendix 7: Sample Risk Assessment Event

**introduction:**

**XYZ Consultation Exhibition**

*Date, year, venue*

Risk assessment: introduction

The XYZ event will be held on *date, year*, at *venue*. This is the? time this event has been held. The event is organized by?

The event will be open to the public on *date* at *time*. There is *for example* a breakfast seminar in the main auditorium starting at 8.30am. Guests for this event have all pre-registered and number about 50. The event's load-in will start on *date* at *time* with the building of the shell schemes and the installation of the electrical works. The aim of this event is to display 50 of the area's leading businesses. Each exhibitor will be provided with a shell scheme and or space in the? room at insert (*name of room / venue*). There will also be 3 seminars taking place in the Conference Room and a keynote speech taking place in the main auditorium.

The event is free to visitors, who will be expected to use the existing network of pay and display car parks when visiting the event. We are anticipating an audience of about? *local business people*. The following risk assessment will identify the potential hazards and the risks they carry, and will detail the control measures in place to minimize the risk.

Please note that, although this risk assessment was carried out in a systematic manner throughout the site, there may still be hazards that have not been recognized. It is therefore the responsibility of the event team to continually monitor the event for hazards and report them to the event manager immediately.

Completed by:

Name:

Organisation:

Date Revision: 1

Date Revision: 2

The following is an example entry of what a typical risk assessment may look like

HAZARD	CONSEQUENCE IF IT HAPPENS	GROUPS AT RISK	CONTROLS / ACTION	RESIDUAL RISK	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Access – vehicle movements around the XYZ venue	Minor injury, major injury, death – High	Public, stewards, contractors  Exhibitors	Exhibitors and contractors' vehicles will be allowed to enter the designated unloading areas at the back of the venue from where they can unload any equipment that needs to be brought to their stand.	Low	Event Manager  Event Stewards  The Venue