

STAR Group Guide 2011-12
Part Six



6.4 10 Step Guide for Organizing an Event

Stage	Person Responsible	Date Due	Completed
Identify the objectives(s)			
Identify your resources			
Choose a type of event			
Prepare budget			
List all tasks required			
Order and prioritise tasks			
Delegate tasks			
Advertise			
Monitor progress			

Whether you're organising a fundraising or campaigning event, or a stall to raise awareness, here is some basic guidance on **10 simple step-steps** you might follow to make the whole thing run more smoothly!

1. Identity your objective(s)

What do you seek to achieve through your event?

This could be raising a certain amount of money, getting a certain number of people to join your STAR group, or getting as many people as possible to sign a petition, for example. Different objectives are best reached with different types of events in different locations and at different times.

Try to keep your objectives SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time bound

2. Identify your resources

What capacity do you have?

- ★ How many people can you get to help you during the event?
- ★ How much money do you have available (or how much money can you spend and still raise some as well)?
- ★ How much time can you give to organising the event?
- ★ How many people will be able to help?
- ★ Are there any other resources available to you?
- ★ What have you done successfully in the past?

Especially if the event is a fundraiser, think about anything you can get for free!

3. Choose type of event

Different types of events require different levels of organization and, more importantly, time, so make sure you're realistic with your plans. Some common options include pub nights, quiz nights, club nights, movie screenings, stand-up comedy events, information/campaigning stalls, cake sales.... But there are many more things you could do, ranging from bouncy castles and sumo wrestling mats to theatre nights and sponsored runs/walks/cycle rides/fasts etc. Have a look in the 'Fundraising' section of this guide for more ideas!

Be creative, and don't limit yourself to what a particular type of event is usually like! Think about including a variety of things in your event. If you are holding a pub or quiz night, for example, you could include a raffle as well. In a movie screening you could sell cake or raffle tickets, as well as show a movie. If you are setting up a stall, you could sell cake; try to get people signed up for a sponsored event; or get sponsors for your sponsored event. If your event includes anything of a competitive nature, you could get everyone to vote! Karaoke or video games on a games console could be

quite fun in an unusual setting, as could any weird and funny competitions!

4. List, prioritise, and delegate all the tasks

Write down everything that needs to be done.

Working out what you need to do in order to achieve your objectives is one of the most important stages of organising an event. It will help you to make sure that you don't leave anything out and have enough time for all the things you need to do!

Put all the tasks identified in the order they need to be completed and set a deadline for completion.

Identify which tasks are dependent on other tasks having been already completed. This will help you to prioritise the most important tasks, and understand the implications of one part of your project running late.

Make clear plans about who does what.

Whether it is baking cakes, selling raffle tickets, designing a poster, checking out venues, booking performers or booking a room at your university. It is important to delegate tasks to the whole group. This can help to keep everyone involved with the project motivated and help you to achieve your objectives – you can't do it all yourself!

Even if your group is small, don't forget that there are a lot of people willing to put in a couple of hours here and there, even if they're not interested in being involved in the long-term.

5. Think about your target audience

This decision will influence the way you advertise and the timing of your event, amongst other things. You could decide to target mainly students from your own university (or other universities nearby), or you could open the event up and try to get people from a particular area, for example.

6. Select location and timing

Make sure the location is accessible for your target group. This could be a venue at your university, which would mean easy access for students. Or you could try a local pub, a club or another venue outside of your campus, especially if your target group is not just students.

Make sure that your location matches the type of event you're organising. You don't want to make your guests feel uncomfortable by holding a quiz night in the formal setting of a lecture hall, for example. Similarly, maybe showing an emotional movie about the plight of refugees in a pub is not a good idea either.

Make sure your event does not clash with essay deadlines or major exams, especially if your target group is students. Also check that your event doesn't clash with any other big events at your university or town, to make sure you have enough audience!

Link your event to something that's happening anyway - although this can also mean that you face a lot of competition! A 'Halloween fundraiser' sounds better than

just 'fundraiser', and a movie about refugee women will sound more relevant and important around International Women's Day. Anything quirky is especially likely to attract people's attention, so don't limit yourself to the official holidays. The Eurovision song contest, Pancake Day, and major sports events, for example, are some dates you could take advantage of.

7. Advertise!

The first thing to think about is what kind of advertising will best serve your target group, type of event, and location. You can do leaflets, posters, a Facebook event/group, and don't forget advertising through university groups and societies! For example, there might be other societies that deal with refugee/asylum seeker/immigrant issues, and they might be willing to circulate information about your event on their mailing lists. People are always more likely to take notice of an event if they have a connection to it, rather than just seeing a poster on the wall.

Make sure you include all the relevant information on the advertisements.

Location, date and time, organiser, where the money will go etc. It's also good to include some links to relevant information, so that people can find out more.

Try and make your posters/leaflets as catchy and noticeable as possible, e.g. use bright colours, pictures, and something that grabs people's attention immediately. You could try and come up with a theme, and remember that the more relevant the event is, the easier it will be to advertise (for example, a pancake sale in aid of refugees makes much more sense on Pancake Day!).

People are more likely to show up if they are reminded about the event several times, so don't just put up a few posters and then forget about it! For example, always keep a stash of leaflets on you in the weeks leading up to your event wherever you go, that way you can give something tangible to people when they get interested, after you've casually mentioned your event... If you have a Facebook page, send people reminders, and ask them to invite their friends as well. Don't send too many, but at least send one the day before the event. And finally, make sure that all of your friends are definitely going to come!

8. Monitor Progress

Once you've created and organised your objectives and plans, make sure you continue to refer to them throughout the duration of your project / event.

This will help you track your progress towards, and spot any problems or incomplete tasks at an early stage, making them easier to overcome.

Create a work plan, either shared and/or one for each person.

Set regular dates and meetings to review progress.

9. On the day

Last minute organisation. On the day of the event, or a couple of days before if required, give a call to all the people who are responsible for the event's success. This

includes making sure that the venue is free and available at the right time, that anything that's being delivered is arriving at the right time, and that any refreshments/equipment are ready to use. If you have speakers, check that they know where and when they are supposed to arrive, and most importantly, contact all the people who have promised to help out during the day!

Last minute advertising. Especially if your event is taking place at a university, or you feel like you haven't done enough advertising, do some last minute leafleting or send texts to your friends who have promised to show up.

Setup. Make sure you arrive at the venue early enough to set it up. This will give you time to pick up anything you've forgotten, and you can also give a little briefing to your volunteers.

During the event. The aim is for everything to go as smoothly as possible, this is where all the time you put into planning pays off! During the event, you really just want to make people feel welcome, and avoid any disasters. Make sure everyone knows what they're doing at what time and keep an eye on the clock.

Record your event. Make sure you take lots of photos or a video to record your event and don't forget to share it with the STAR network!

Collect contact details. It's always a good idea to bring a sign-up sheet to recruit new members and keep attendees up-to-date with future campaigns and events.

10. In the end and afterwards

Make sure you return anything you've borrowed equipment, keys to a university room etc.

Do the cleaning if you've promised to do so.

Thank everyone who was involved in the event! This is mega important and easy to forget after hectic day! Don't forget to thank the people who donated something or spoke/performed at the event as well. Often this is best done by letter or e-mail.

Keep your money safe (in a locked box or safe preferably) during the event, and especially after the event. If your event finishes late, consider leaving the money somewhere until you can transport it safely the next day. Try to have two people around when you're moving the money, as well as when you're counting the money.

Follow up! send attendees some information about your society, how to get involved, and how to find out more about the related issues after an event, especially if your event is more about awareness raising (for example a movie night).

Give yourself a massive tap on the back! ☺