

7. Events Organising

How to organise events

Introduction

Whether you're organising a fundraising or campaigning event, or a stall to raise awareness, there are a few things to remember that will make the whole experience smoother. Here is some basic guidance on stages you might follow.

Key stages in organising an event

1. Identify your objective(s)

What do you want to achieve with the 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.

2. Identify your resources

Think about the capacity 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? Are there any other resources available to you? Especially if the event is a fundraiser, have a 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, any video games, for example on a games console, could be quite fun in an unusual setting, as could any weird and funny competitions.

4. Think about your target audience

Decide whom your event is targeted at.

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.

5. 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.
- ★ **It can be a good idea to 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 and tacky 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.

6. Advertise, advertise, 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 & 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 if they're interested.
- ★ **Try and make your posters/leaflets as catchy and noticeable as possible,** e.g. use bright colours, pictures, and something that grabs the 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 though, but at least send one the day before the event. And finally, make sure that all of your friends are definitely going to come.

7. List 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, buying raffle tickets, designing a poster, checking out venues, booking performers or booking a room at university. It is important to delegate tasks to the whole group. This can help to keep all the other people 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.

On the day

1. Last minute organisation

On the day of the event, or a couple of days before if required, give a call to all the people that the success of your event depends on.

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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. In the end and afterwards

After the event officially finishes, 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, and most importantly, don't forget to thank everyone who was involved in the event.

If the event was a fundraiser, the most important thing to take care of is the money you have raised. Keep it 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.

Don't forget to thank the people who donated something or spoke/performed at the event as well!